FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL

BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK
For more information about the program, School or staff research interests, visit our home page at http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialhumanities
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1. INTRODUCTION

Field education provides students with supervised opportunities to experience professional practice and socialisation in a work setting during a specified period of time, enabling student to benefit from experiential learning, linking and reflecting upon the relationship between theoretical perspectives and field experience thereby developing an awareness of social work values and competence in a range of social work skills.

A core component of RMIT University Social Work Programs (MSW, BSW, BSW/B.Soc.Sc.(psych.)) is the satisfactory completion of two seventy-day field placements. Although the AASW requires that students be rated upon performance during placement the final result is not graded. The first placement generally focuses upon direct practice with individuals, families and small groups. Field Educators are encouraged to incorporate other tasks and/or small projects as relevant. Satisfactory completion of third year field education is a pre-requisite to undertaking a final placement.

The second field education placement generally has a broader focus which is likely to involve engagement in a project or projects relating to: community development, social research, social policy, organisational or program development.

The Field Education courses (1 & 2) occupy a special and central place within the social work programs. Between them, they encompass most of the capabilities of the program that inform student experiences. Field Education is weighted this way (72 credit points in total) because it provides students with opportunities to develop and integrate their professional capabilities in practice. It also allows students to demonstrate their ability to be assessed across the range of capabilities while working within at least two different practice settings.

The field education program is dependent upon the contribution of students, Field Educators, agencies and the University. For this reason, maximum participation of all parties in the process of developing and implementing the field education program is important. Field Educator Kits contain the core social work curriculum, the Field Education Manuals (BSW &/ or MSW) and a social work field education ‘Reader’, updated each year. Two briefings are run in second semester for field supervisors.
Patterns of placement days may vary from five days per week, to a minimum of two days per week. Under certain conditions one of the two placements may be arranged within student’s place of employment, pending negotiation and with the approval of the School and the employing agency to ensure that the requirements set by the AASW *Australian Social Work Education and Standards* (2010) can be met (see section 9: Field Education Policies). The majority of BSW field education experience takes place in second semester (June-December). Placements outside these timelines may be negotiated according to student circumstances and availability of suitable placement.

The BSW Field Education Manual outlines the policies, practices and expectations of the two Field Education courses in the Bachelor of Social Work. It has been developed over a number of years in consultation with graduates, colleagues, Field Educators, students, the Combined Schools of Social Work and the Australian Association of Social Work. This manual is also designed to help in the development of individualised educational planning for students undertaking field placements in varied and diverse field sites. Because no two field experiences are identical, this manual serves as a general guide within a framework of standardised expectations.

This manual is complemented by specific information (on the website) for students, a Field Educator Resource Kit and Cleak, H and Wilson, J (2007) *Making the Most of Field Placement*. Thomson, Southbank Victoria. These resources are supplemented by information provided in Field Education Briefings in the semester prior to placement, Integrative Seminars which students are required to attend, and Field Educator Briefings held throughout the year. Course documents and pro formas are available on the RMIT website at [http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialservices/fieldeducation](http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialservices/fieldeducation)
2. RMIT FIELD EDUCATION STAFF CONTACTS

2.1 Staff Contacts

Social Work Field Education Staff

Linette Hawkins (for BSW 4th / final year field education students)
Ph: 9925 3051  Fax: 9925 1855 Email: linette.hawkins@rmit.edu.au

Christine Craik (for BSW 3rd year field education students)
Ph: 9925 2940  Fax: 9925 1855 Email: christine.craik@rmit.edu.au

Yvonne Rolley, Social Work Field Education Development Officer
Ph: 9925 2328  Fax: 9925 1855  Email: Yvonne.rolley@rmit.edu.au

• Contact Social Work Field Education staff to discuss placement issues; theoretical issues; social work field education feedback, policy, development and support.

Social Work Field Education Administrative Staff

Telephone: 9925 9934; 9925 1922

• Contact socialwork@rmit.edu.au regarding field education forms, processes, procedures and other administrative issues.

2.2 Mailing Address

RMIT University, School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, Building 8, Level 7
GPO Box 2476, Melbourne 3001

2.3 Location

All Field Education staff are located in Building 8 (360 Swanston St, Melbourne) Level 7.
3. RMIT SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

3.1 History of Social Work at RMIT University

Beginning in 1973, the Department of Social Work was established within Phillip Institute of Technology. The Phillip Institute of Technology amalgamated with RMIT in 1992. The Social Work Programs operate within the School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning in the Design and Social Context Portfolio.

In addition to the Bachelor of Social Work the School offers a Master of Social Work, a double degree in Social Work / Psychology and other undergraduate degrees in Social Science, Psychology, Legal and Dispute Studies, Youth Work, Environment/Environment Science, Planning, International Studies, Criminal Justice, Community Services, and Languages, Translating and Interpreting.

3.2 RMIT University Bachelor of Social Work

The Bachelor of Social Work is designed to develop professional practice in the human services sector and the ability to meet demands of current and emerging policy and practice contexts. The program equips graduates with the knowledge, skills and ethical foundations to enact practice for individual and collective well-being from a social justice perspective. This combines with the ability to critically analyse and reflect on social policy and organisational practices, as well as skills necessary for advocating for change.

Graduates are likely to be employed in both the government and non government sectors, working in a diverse range of practice settings.

The Bachelor of Social Work is a four year undergraduate program accredited by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). This program is designed to prepare students for effective professional practice in social work, social policy, and associated occupations.

3.3 Staff Involvement and Theoretical Orientation

Staff are committed to social justice, social reform and the belief that social change needs to be actively pursued by challenges to structural and institutional barriers. The program encourages students to develop the ability to critically analyse the cultural, economic, political, social and psychological factors which help mould the structures that affect human welfare, and to use appropriate skills and strategies with individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities to facilitate social change.

The Bachelor of Social Work is a distinct four-year program, but shares a range of common courses with other programs within the School. The Bachelor of Social Work’s structure and program content is outlined in Table 1.

3.4 Accreditation

RMIT’s field education policies and practices are guided by the principles and minimum requirements for field education as stated in the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (AASW, Canberra, ACT. 2010).
3.5 Principles for RMIT University Social Work Education

RMIT University Social Work Graduates will develop a critical and reflexive capacity to:

- Work with and for society’s most vulnerable and marginalised individuals, families, groups and communities
- Analyse issues of social disadvantage, oppression and marginalisation from a socio-political and economic framework recognising the impact of capitalism on social relations and promoting social justice and human rights within a global perspective
- Understand the limits and strengths of the state’s policy, legislative and institutional arrangements on the context of practice in addressing social disadvantage
- Acquire the interdisciplinary knowledge required for practice and practice knowledge and skills
- Acquire the ability to transfer this knowledge and skills to the diverse range of practice settings
- Apply their knowledge and practice skills in a manner that confronts structural disadvantage arising from cultural and religious difference, patriarchy, racism, disability, age and discrimination of the basis of sexual preference
- Recognise the power differential between the practitioner and vulnerable marginalised individuals, families, groups and communities
- Promote ethical, respectful, and transparent interdisciplinary practice processes
- Participate robustly in the contemporary and changing ideological and political debates impacting on practice in an informed, flexible and grounded manner.
4. THE FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM

Field education is a critical and core feature of RMIT University’s Social Work Programs. The strong emphasis given to field education is reflected in the resources invested, the integration of field education and academic courses, and the development of flexible and innovative approaches to field education.

Table 1.1 2012 Bachelor of Social Work Program BP026

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Table 1.2 2012 Bachelor of Social Work/ Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) BP113

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Year 4 | Semester 1 | Semester 2
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HUSO1296 | Indigenous Studies | BESC1453 | Psychology, Society & Organisations
BESC1437 | Philosophy & Methodology of Psychology | BESC1445 | Psychopathology & Models of Intervention
BESC1433 | Psychological Assessment & Individual Differences |  | Policy and Practice Elective
| Student Elective |  | HWSS2163 | Law for Social Work Practice

4.1 **Field Education Courses**

A core component of the Bachelor of Social Work is the satisfactory completion of two seventy day field placements. The first placement is in Year 3 (HWSS1137 - Field Education I) of the **BSW and BSW/B.Soc.Sc. Psychology programs**. The main focus is direct practice with individuals, families and small groups. Field Educators are encouraged to incorporate other tasks and/or small projects as relevant. Satisfactory completion of third year field education is a pre-requisite to undertaking a fourth year placement.

The second field education placement in final year (HWSS1143 - Field Education 2) may be primary engagement in a project or projects relating to: community development, social research, social policy, organisational or program development.

A pre-requisite Field Education 1 placement is satisfactory completion of Social Work with Individuals. For Field Education 2 students must have satisfactorily completed the first placement as well as Social Work with Families and Community Work.

The Field Education courses (1 & 2) occupy a special and central place within the RMIT BSW program. Between them, they encompass most of the capabilities of the program that inform student experiences. Field Education is weighted this way (72 credit points in total) because it provides students with opportunities to develop and integrate their professional capabilities in practice. It also allows students to demonstrate their ability to be assessed across the range of capabilities while working within at least two different practice settings.

Field Education courses are linked to core courses scheduled in the BSW program. These links are important because they allow students to integrate their knowledge, skills and values into practice. Students are expected to connect their practice experiences with their classroom based learning, and vice-versa. This requires students to import academic learning into the field, as well as bringing their field learning in to the university.

For students, field placements are often the most meaningful part of their program and the culmination of their learning experience. Students are able to test out classroom-based learning in practice and develop their ability for critical self-reflection on their practice and values.

Conversely, the placement experience can be a point in the program where some students decide not to pursue a career in social work. For most of these students arriving at this decision is not...
4.2 Definition of Field Education

Field education provides students with supervised opportunities to experience professional practice and socialisation in a work setting during a specified period of time. It provides students with the opportunity for experiential learning, linking and reflecting upon the relationship between theoretical perspectives and field experience, and an opportunity to develop competence in a range of social work skills.

4.3 The Importance of Field Education

As a practice based profession, education in social work must include conscious critical reflection on and evaluation of student’s actual practice performance. Field education: 
"provides an educational experience which is more complex and diverse than that simulated in the classroom. Effective performance in social work, welfare work and youth work requires a combination of knowledge, skills, values and personal attributes integrated only in the complexity of actual practice. Field placements provide real rather than constructed tasks which are appropriate for student learning and of sufficient quantity and central relevance to the student's future professional role. Orientation workshops, forums and seminars held in placement settings, as well as laboratory work, are viewed as supplementing rather than being alternatives to field placements." (VPSEC Report, 1986:12)

4.4 Principles of Field Education

RMIT promotes partnership with agencies and networks of agencies, for joint participation and exchanges of services that extend beyond field education into other areas including research, consultancy and classroom teaching. The field education program is dependent upon the contribution of students, Field Educators, agencies and the University. For this reason, maximum participation of all parties in the process of developing and implementing the field education program is important.

The field education program seeks to develop practitioners who are:
- Self-responsible and resourceful;
- Innovative;
- Effective negotiators and advocates;
- Personally and professionally powerful in such a way that they empower people in their lives, social organisations and communities; and
- Ethical in their use of power, knowledge and skills.

Field Education therefore seeks to generate opportunities for:
- **Approaches to practice** based on critical theory, which acknowledge that we live and work in a fundamentally unjust world and that individual problems are significantly influenced by social structures. These approaches recognise the potential for individual response and change (rather than accommodation to oppressive social situations), and also the need for social change.
• **Working collaboratively** with other students, with School staff, and with many different sorts of workers.
• **Self-responsibility** so that students integrate their own theoretical and practical experiences into their personal, critically reflective practice or action. Students are expected to be active participants in all aspects of the field education program: from observation visits (component of Field Analysis course), to placement selection, and assessment.
• **Using consultation** from Co-Field Educators, and staff and students from other disciplines.
• **Developing negotiation** as an important part of the placement selection process and as an important practice skill.
• **Developing common bases for agreement and action** as in the learning plans (reached through negotiation by students with their Field Educator and liaison person). These offer an experience of joint planning and conscious thoughtful practice, based on mutual agreement.
• **Initiative and advocacy** in seeking new and innovative placements.
• **Constructive criticism** - students, Field Educators and staff are encouraged to monitor and evaluate the field education program, through the student assessment report and a range of feedback opportunities.

### 4.5 Field Education Flexibility

Flexible learning is a term used to emphasise the flexibility and choice offered to students required to construct a learning program which best suits the specific individual, regional, industrial, field, professional and pedagogical needs at a particular point of time. RMIT University acknowledges that higher education study is often one of several demands and responsibilities borne by students. Others may include paid employment, family commitments or community responsibilities. Therefore RMIT promotes flexible delivery of field education by exploring a range of innovative placement opportunities where possible.

Innovations in field education can also occur in relation to:

• The **structure** of field education, that is, the way it is organised. For example, weekend or evening placements, and more flexible time-plans to accommodate the nature of the work and the student's learning needs. Placements involving regular weekend or out of hours practicum are very limited and few agencies can offer this.
• The **location** of the field placement. Innovative projects can be developed within well-established agencies (where new tasks or processes are developed). Placements may be developed in settings such as unions or politicians' offices, or in areas with few social work or human service resources.
• The placement **tasks** may include welfare rights advocacy, community action campaigns, the establishment of self-help groups or policy projects.
• The **timing** of field placements: Students’ needs for flexible timing and extended periods for placement are taken into account alongside opportunities provided by agencies outside the standard semesters.
• The **content** of field placements, which includes the way supervision and student learning, is organised and supported.
• The **placement process**. The process components include the communication systems to ensure open dialogue between multiple players and thoughtful selection and matching of student characteristics and learning with the agency.

> Adapted from Cleak, Hawkins and Hess (1999), Innovative Field Options.

In regard to the flexibility of field education the following policy guidelines are in place:
Placements must be structured in a way that is educationally viable (so that educational goals can be achieved). Patterns of placement days may vary from five days per week, to a minimum of two days per week. Placements that are two days per week must include at least two full time (five day) block periods (AASW Australian Social Work and Accreditation Standards, February 2008).

Provision of social work supervision by a field educator employed by or connected with the agency.

Under certain conditions one of the two placements may be arranged within student’s place of employment, pending negotiation and with the approval of the School and the employing agency to ensure that the requirements set by the AASW Australian Social Work Education and Standards (March, 2009) can be met (see section 9: Field Education Policies).

Where students have had difficulty in accomplishing a satisfactory standard of academic work, caution must be exercised in the degree of flexibility about pattern and location of field placements.

The collaboration required for innovative field placements depends upon the partnership model, whereby managers, practitioners, students and academics contribute to the development and delivery of the curriculum alongside provision of placements.

Permission for a student to undertake and/or complete their placement outside the semester in which they are enrolled may be given in extenuating circumstances. This may apply following early termination of placement, where certain conditions stipulated by a Progress Panel must be addressed prior to the student undertaking another placement to complete the field education course in which they are enrolled.

4.6 Combined Schools of Social Work Field Education Program

Collaboration between field education staff in the Schools of Social Work in Victoria during the past two decades has resulted in the Combined Schools of Social Work Field Education program.

The CSSW Network provides annual introductory and advanced workshops for field education educators / task supervisors, and other workshops as decided by the group. The network also engages in presenting a combined voice to the Heads of Schools and AASW on matters relating to field education which concern all schools, and to identify and respond to patterns of change in the field, such as enrolment trends in social work programs and the growing de-classification of social work positions.

In line with the Combined School’s commitment to a collaborative process and efforts to avoid agencies being repeatedly contacted for placements, students are instructed not to pursue their own placement or make contact with an agency without the prior knowledge of the Field Education Coordinator. If students are interested in undertaking a placement at a specific agency or in a specialised area or where they have personal connections, they should contact their field education coordinator, who will check that a placement with the agency has not been allocated to another university. If not, field education staff may then pursue a potential placement on the student’s behalf, or negotiate with the student the best way to pursue the placement option.
5. ETHICS FOR FIELD PRACTICE

5.1 Code of Ethics

In every placement students can expect to be involved in other people's lives in ways, which confront them with ethical decisions. These decisions are usually defined as choices in which any alternative results in an undesirable action. Various professional bodies have developed a ‘Code of Ethics’ that attempt to guide workers facing the ethical dilemmas of daily practice.

A copy of the AASW Code of Professional Ethics can be downloaded from their website: http://www.aasw.asn.au/publications/ethics_and_standards. It can also be accessed from the RMIT Social Work Field Education website. The AASW Code of Ethics should be read by all students and referred to during placement as required (Refer Learning Plan Core Learning Areas 1.1).

5.2 On-going Contact with Service Users

Organisational accountability is particularly important in considering the issue of students having contact with service-users after placement has finished. If students have voluntary, on-going contact with a service user after placement has finished, the School recommends that it is done so only with the full knowledge of the placement agency, and if possible through linking with an agency volunteer program, or the Field Educator. Students must also discuss the situation with the Field Education Co-ordinator. If unavailable, other field education staff should be contacted.

5.3 Confidentiality - An Important Ethical Issue For Students On Placement

The following extract provides Guidelines for Students Taking Case Material from the Field into the Classroom, which has been adapted from Wilson (1978, pp.35-36).

Students should inquire whether any policies exist in their agency regarding the use of agency material. These should be studied before a situation arises where the student wishes to use agency record materials in the classroom. Some basic guidelines are presented below:

1. All names of clients, relatives, and significant others mentioned by name in a case record or recording must be altered. Pseudonyms or incorrect initials can be used. If names are changed rather than simply erased or obliterated, a notation should appear clearly indicating that this has been done.

2. If the interview or case material concerns a highly unusual or much publicised situation that could be identified easily even after the client's name has been changed, the nature of the primary issue or presenting problem, proper nouns, and certain identifying information may also require alteration. It is likely that this may affect the reality of the situation and make it more difficult for the student to adequately present what really happened, but if it comes to a choice between presenting accurate recordings in the classroom and preserving the privacy and confidentiality of the consumers served, the client's needs must take priority.

3. Material of a highly confidential or incriminating nature should not be taken into the classroom at all. If a student is not certain whether their recording fits into this category or not, they should consult their Field Educator for guidance.

4. Process recordings are the property of the agency and should not be copied or retained by the student. They should be turned in to the student's Field Educator when their
usefulness has ended or at the termination of field placement, and should be stored separately from the official case record.

5. All material that students wish to take into the classroom should be reviewed first by the Field Educator to ensure that proper measures have been taken to preserve confidentiality.

6. Tape and video-recorded material cannot be adequately disguised to preserve confidentiality. Thus, the client's permission must be secured before a student takes it into the classroom. Furthermore, certain technical steps should be taken to conceal identity even when the client has given permission for use of the material. Students should seek specific direction from their Field Educator.

Students need to be aware that ethics of confidentiality also apply to aspects of students' involvement in human service organisations other than ‘case’ material, including policy, organisational and personnel matters.
6. PLACEMENT ALLOCATION PROCESS

6.1 Step 1 - Attend BSW Field Education Briefing/s

During first semester two briefings are provided for third year students and one briefing for final year field education students.

6.2 Step 2 - Student Information Obtained

Step 2 requires students to complete a ‘Personal Information Form’ which indicates the experience, skills and knowledge students bring to field education, together with identified learning needs and areas of interest. A copy of the Personal Information Form is located at http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialservices/fieldeducation

6.3 Step 3 - Agency/Placement Information Obtained

Through discussion with agencies offering placements, field education staff prepare a description of each placement available to RMIT, which is emailed to students at a particular time.

6.4 Step 4 - Expression of Interest

Students are required to indicate interest in five placements on the ‘Expression of Interest Form’ which must be returned to the Field Education Administration Officer. A copy of the Expression of Interest Form is located at http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialservices/fieldeducation

6.5 Step 5 - Allocation Process

Field Education staff take account of students’ educational needs, interests and practical concerns (stated on the Personal Information and Expression of Interest Forms) in matching them with placement opportunities. Once allocated a placement, the student and agency are advised.

6.6 Step 6 - Initial Negotiation Interview

Students arrange an interview with the potential Field Educator to negotiate placement details. During the initial interview, if both parties are satisfied with the arrangement, the student is required to complete the ‘Placement Agreement Form’ (located http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialservices/fieldeducation) in consultation with the Field Educator. Student then returns the completed, signed form to Social Field Education in 8.7.1 at least one week prior to beginning placement.

Factors to Consider When Exploring a Placement with Student / Field Educator

Student should discuss the following issues at the initial interview (Refer: ‘Factors to Consider When Seeking Placement’ at http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialservices/fieldeducation

- Learning Opportunities;
- Methods of Learning;
- The Agency’s and Student’s Value Orientation; and
- Practical Arrangements.
The student should be able to communicate:

- Knowledge and skills brought to placement;
- Learning style;
- Educational goals; and
- Expectations of the Field Educator.

Student should be prepared to provide their Field Educator with a current curriculum vitae/resume. Assistance with preparing a CV can be obtained from the RMIT Career Development and Employment Service, Student Services Centre.

Final year students are encouraged to provide the field educator with a copy of the final report from their previous (3rd year) placement.

The Field Educator/Task Supervisor may explore with students:

- Purpose of the interview;
- Why the student is interested in a placement at the agency;
- Past work experiences of student and Field Educator;
- Description of the placement setting /context;
- What the student’s learning requirements/needs are;
- Learning and task opportunities available to the student;
- Expectations of the student; and
- Supervision opportunities.

### 6.7 Step 7 – Placement Agreement Form

No placement should begin until the Placement Agreement Form has been received at RMIT and confirmed verbally or in writing to all major parties. If prior approval has been given to a placement where there is no social work supervisor on-site, the task supervisor should sign the form. Student should submit the completed form to the Social Work Field Education Administrative Staff (8.7.1) or by Fax (9925 1855). **Forms must be submitted as soon as possible and no later than one week prior to the commencement of placement.**

The placement agreement form ensures that the student is covered by insurance, that placement details meet field education and program requirements, liaison staff are allocated and off-site supervisors are organised (if required).

If the Placement Agreement Form cannot be sent to RMIT before commencing placement, students should contact the Field Education Coordinator for their year to discuss arrangements, otherwise placement days undertaken prior to receiving the Placement Agreement Form will not be recognised.

### 6.8 Step 8 - Placement Confirmation

If the placement details outlined in the Placement Agreement Form meet RMIT University requirements, the form is then approved by the RMIT University Field Education Coordinator for that year. The placement is then confirmed by letter to all parties, along with copies of the Placement Agreement Form. The confirmation letter outlines the staff member who will act as liaison and if required, the person who will provide off-site social work supervision.
If the details outlined do not meet requirements, student or field educator may be asked to discuss requirements/options or renegotiate placement details.

A student who fails to obtain a placement after interviews with three agencies referred to by RMIT University staff may be called in for a discussion to ascertain the underlying factors and assess the student’s suitability to continue with the Social Work Field Education course at that time.

If after the initial interview the placement allocation is seen by either student or Field Educator as unsuitable, a further placement will be allocated. If either party is concerned about the placement allocation following interview, contact should be made with the Field Education Coordinator for that year.

6.9 Getting Orientated to Placement

It is highly recommended that all students use time in the first few weeks of placement to become orientated to the placement. Refer ‘Learning About Your Placement Organisation’ at http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialservices/fieldeducation
7. PARTIES INVOLVED – DEFINITIONS, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Definitions

Field Educator / On-Site Social Work Supervisor

The Field Educator is the person with primary responsibility for facilitating the learning and educational progress of a student in field practice. This person is also responsible for assessing the student’s performance and making recommendations to the University. This person provides social work supervision on-site to the student.

The social work Field Educator may be:

- An ‘on-site’ social worker directly supervising the student; or
- A social worker in another section of the agency at which the student is on placement (i.e. in a different section, on a committee of management, or on Reference Group overseeing the program/project).

In some instances there may be a joint teaching arrangement, where a student is formally assigned to two Field Educators. They may be two social workers sharing the role because both work part time, or because they come from different areas of the field and provide different perspectives in terms of knowledge, skills etc.

In line with accreditation requirements of the Australian Association of Social Workers, Field Educators for social work students need to be qualified social workers. They need to have at least two years' work experience in the field and be eligible for AASW membership (i.e. have completed an accredited Social Work degree).

In cases where there is no qualified social worker to provide on-site social work supervision to students, and yet there are good learning opportunities, supervision may be provided through off-site supervision arrangements.

Off-Site Supervisor

The Off-site supervisor is the social worker responsible for providing supervision to the student when no on-site social work supervisor is available at the agency. Preference is given to agencies where there two or more student placements if off-site supervision is to be provided and / or funded by RMIT. In this situation the student has a task supervisor (not a social worker) on-site and an off-site social worker to provide supervision. Contact details for the off-site supervisor are indicated on the placement confirmation letter sent out to student and agency task supervisor. The Off-site Supervisor’s primary focus is upon practice reflection by the student, linking it with theory from the social work program.

The Off-site Supervisor providing social work supervision may be:

- A social worker connected directly or indirectly with the agency
- A staff member from RMIT University or
- A social worker engaged by RMIT University as a sessional staff member to provide ‘off-site’ supervision.
**Task Supervisor**

The Task Supervisor is a staff member at the agency who comes from a background other than social work, but to whom the student is likely to be responsible on a day to day basis – in provision of direct service or for the planning and implementation of a project. Where a student is primarily supervised by a ‘task supervisor’, the agency and university have a responsibility to ensure that a qualified experienced social worker provides regular supervision to help the student link what they are doing (practice) with the social work theory studied in the BSW program (to reflect, critically review, learn and link).

The RMIT Field Education Administrative staff must be advised if any additional parties are involved who are not listed on the initial Placement Agreement Form. They should also be advised if arrangements are made for the student to engage in practice in an organisation other than the agency stated on the Placement Agreement Form.

**RMIT Social Work Field Education Staff**

Social Work Field Education Staff are employed by the university with the responsibility for organising and co-ordinating student placements, informing Field Educators, and liaising in general with the field on issues relating to field education. See page 6 for staff contact details.

**Liaison Person**

Overall, the liaison person is responsible for:

- *Educational consultation* (as a point of contact for information and support to student and field educator to maximise learning throughout the placement)

- *Monitoring and evaluation of student performance* (review of learning plan and mid placement report)

- *Mediation and problem solving* (respond to any difficulties which arise during the placement)

Their primary responsibility is to ensure that the student is meeting the school’s educational objectives and requirements. The liaison person is the first point of contact for students and agency/Field Educators for information, queries, concerns, etc.

The liaison person is likely to be an RMIT staff member. Contact details of the liaison person are stated on the placement confirmation letter sent out to all parties.

A liaison person may also provide the off-site supervision. In this instance, the Field Education Co-ordinator or another member of the RMIT field education staff can be called in as an outside party to facilitate problem solving should the need arise, or should any of the parties request this.

If the liaison person is also providing off-site supervision, it is possible that there will be additional meetings, particularly in the initial phase of the placement, and that they will be more actively involved in developing the final assessment report.
7.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The School's Role in Field Education

- Development and maintenance of a well-organised and well-resourced field education program.
- Development and maintenance of a substantial, responsive and relevant curriculum to support field practice.
- Provision of field teacher education and support.
- Provision of guidelines for field learning, minimum standards and assessment at each level of the student's education.
- Maintenance of standards and equity across placement experiences and assessment. Adequate pre-placement planning and liaison visiting.
- A fair and accessible evaluation and assessment procedure for student performance which gives a central place to Field Educators' contributions.
- Feedback to Field Educators and students.
- Allocation of Liaison staff.
- Ensuring adequate supervision is provided.

The Student's Role in Field Education

- Development of learning needs and objectives, within the framework of School and field expectations.
- Willingness to participate actively in the placement allocation process.
- Willingness to work within the School's and agencies' field education requirements.
- Ability to make appropriate choices about and within placement on the basis of their learning interests and needs.
- Accountability to the placement agency, including keeping the agency informed of movements related to the placement and observing normal courtesies, such as notifying the agency of sickness or inability to keep an appointment.
- Ensuring that all practical requirements (travel costs, desk space, etc) are negotiated prior to placement.
- As a representative of the agency, respect its norms of punctuality, dress and so on.
- Willingness to pursue relevant theoretical material to complement placement experiences.
- Willingness to engage in self-evaluation and receive constructive feedback.
- Availability to attend liaison sessions, informal negotiation session, integrative seminars and the Field Education Progress Panel.

The Agency's Role in Field Education

- Provision of a range of relevant and innovative practice opportunities suitable for student learning.
- Provision of staff time for field teaching, space and facilities.
- Willingness for students to participate in the organisational processes of the agency.
- Support for Field Educators (in terms of time, recognition of workload, replacement staff in the event that Field Educators are ill or unable to continue field teaching).
- Provision of adequate orientation to and feedback from the agency for students.
- Provision of up-to-date information to the School about:
  - placement needs, opportunities and requirements;
  - student placement contact person;
  - basic agency information, as relevant;
- field placement policy.
  • Provision of equal opportunity and affirmative action for students with disabilities and ‘disadvantaged’ backgrounds.

**The Field Educator's Role in Field Education**

- Participation in placement pre-planning, Field Educators' orientations, and the student/placement selection process.
- Willingness to make realistic commitments about the number of student placements offered and for which placement period, and then to follow through on such commitments.
- Clarity about knowledge, skills and other requirements for completing placement activities.
- Identification of suitable tasks for student's level of placement.
- Clarity about expectations of students and feedback to them about performance.
- Time for regular supervision sessions.
- Completion of written assessment report on student's performance.
- Availability to attend Field Education Progress Panel if necessary.
- Willingness to provide field teaching to students with differing needs for educational support and supervision.

**The Task Supervisor’s Role in Field Education**

- Orient the student to the agency and its operations.
- In conjunction with the student and off-site Field Educator, identify appropriate tasks and learning opportunities within the agency.
- Contribute to the student’s understanding of the practice issues and methods of the agency.
- Oversee the activity of the student on a day-to-day basis.
- Participate in liaison meetings with the student and off-site supervisor, contributing practice experience and knowledge of the agency’s operations and the student’s progress.
- In conjunction with the student and off-site supervisor, assist in the formulation of various evaluation reports.

**The Off-site Supervisor’s Role in Field Education**

- Understanding of learning opportunities, knowledge, skills and other requirements of agency for completing placement activities.
- Understanding of expectations of student in consultation / liaison with Task Supervisor/s
- Provision of regular formal supervision sessions and intermittent / informal individual communication as required by student
- Participation with student and Task Supervisor/s in Mid Placement Review
- Completion of written assessment report on student's performance.
- Availability to attend Field Education Progress Panel if necessary.
8. PLACEMENT COMPONENTS

8.1 Placement Briefings

Briefings for Students

Briefings are held in the semester prior to undertaking the field placement. These briefings are designed to provide students with information about the field education program and the procedures that are followed. The briefings also allow students to consider their learning goals, priorities, strengths and knowledge, as well as their individual learning styles and approaches to learning, the Field Educator/student relationship, and the development of an educational plan.

Briefings cover a range of topics including:

- Course requirements;
- Guest speakers – past students and potential Field Educators;
- Supervision and assessment requirements;
- Roles and responsibilities of parties involved.

Students who are unable to attend a briefing are required to:

1. notify the Social Work Field Education Administrative Officer by phone (9925 1934) before the briefing is held; and
2. submit to the Field Education Team an explanation as to the reasons for non attendance (attaching any relevant documentary evidence, e.g. medical certificate).

As these briefings are an integral part of a student’s preparation for field education students are expected to place priority on attending these. Failure to attend briefings may result in student not being able to start placement until alternate preparation takes place.

Briefings for Field Educators and Task Supervisors

Briefings for Field Educators and task supervisors (including other agency staff involved in the student placement) are held in 2nd semester by the RMIT Social Work Field Education Team. These briefings cover all major aspects of the field placement including learning plans, supervision, expectations and assessment. Field Educators and Task Supervisors will be advised of dates, times and locations of Field Education Briefings prior to commencement of placements.

Introductory and Advanced Workshops for Field Educators auspiced and run by the Combined Schools of Social Work are held annually.

Refer also the workbook “Making the Most of Field Placement” (2007) by Cleak and Wilson

8.2 Integrative Seminars

Integrative seminars are held during placement to assist students to analyse their practice and critically reflect on their field experience. Field Education Staff believe that student’s practice development is enhanced when they are able to share their successes, mistakes and dilemmas with their peers, in a supportive environment. The Australian Association of Social Workers emphasises the importance of integrative seminars whilst on placement.
Purpose of Integrative Seminars

1. To provide a forum in which students can discuss ideas and issues arising in their field education. These may include value dilemmas, role ambiguity, ethical issues, and a wide variety of practice issues.

2. To provide a forum in which students can discuss their developing work, with a view to improving their social work practice through mutual problem-solving, feedback and critical analysis.

3. To enable students to develop skills in peer support and peer review.

4. To enable students to learn group skills through participation.

5. To enable students to learn and practice communication skills.

6. To enable students to learn about agencies other than the one at which they are placed and to begin to form professional resource networks.

7. To be exposed to areas and styles of work other than their own.

8. To produce a forum in which students are encouraged to reflect on the development of their skills, professional competencies and professional identity, thus encouraging the integration of theory and practice.

Attendance

A series of three integrative seminars are held in second semester. Dates, times and are advised prior to commencement of semester 2.

Students are expected to attend all three integrative seminars held throughout their placement. Attendance at integrative seminars is counted as placement time, the equivalent of one half day.

As with the pre-placement briefings, students who are unable to attend an integrative seminar are required to:

1. notify the Social Work Field Education Administrative Officer by phone (9925 1922/ 9925 9934) before the briefing is held; and

2. submit to the Integrative Seminar Coordinator an explanation as to the reasons for non-attendance (attaching any relevant documentary evidence, e.g., medical certificate).

Non-attendance at integrative seminars (without sufficient explanation) may result in students being required to complete additional work demonstrating the application of theory in their placement.

8.3 Liaison

Liaison between School, Students and Field Educators

Liaison visits by academic staff to agencies while students are on placement are an integral part of the field education program. Each student is assigned a liaison person. (See Section 7 for an outline of the role and responsibilities of the liaison person). There will be a minimum of three
contacts which will usually include two liaison visits to the agency. The initial contact should be within the first 10 – 15 days of placement. Additional visits may take place for placements negotiated over an extended period of time or if any difficulties arise or if requested by any of the parties. Shortly after placement commences Student and/or Field Educator should contact the liaison person to negotiate a suitable date and time for the first liaison visit. Students and Field Educators are encouraged to make contact with their liaison person at other times, if necessary. The liaison person also assists the RMIT Field Education Co-ordinator to monitor placements through progress reports after each liaison visit.

When staff other than the agency Field Educator are involved in student supervision it is recommended that both parties participate with student in liaison visits.

Expectations

Students are expected to provide preparatory material, including the learning plan, for the liaison person before each visit (eg. summaries of work undertaken, reports or case summaries). A draft learning plan should be sent to the liaison person within the first few weeks (by day 10-15) of commencing placement and/or at least three days prior to the first liaison visit.

Field Educators are expected to be involved in the planning of each liaison meeting and to prepare any relevant material before hand. The liaison reports will be provided to field educator/s and student upon request. These are placed on the student’s file at RMIT University after the final liaison visit.

8.4 Supervision

Supervision is critical to social work field education placements. As O’Connor, Wilson and Thomas (1991) state:

“Supervision refers to a formal prearranged situation where the student’s work is reviewed, salient principles are observed and related to form a cohesive link between the specific situation and general theory, and plans are made for future work” (p.203).

The two components of field education are the educational process (identifying and making explicit the learning required) and the social work content (knowledge and skills relevant to the situation). Supervision requires planned, regular periods of time that student and supervisor spend together discussing the student’s work in the placement and reviewing the learning progress. The AASW stipulates that the social work supervisor provides a minimum of one and a half hours per week (that is, for every five days on placement) formal student supervision.

Process


The supervisory process is commonly described as having three principal functions:

- The educative function
- The supportive function
- The management function (Kadushin, 1976).
These three functions frequently overlap, but it is possible to identify the primary function of any supervisory episode.

**The Educative Function**

The supervisory process is primarily an educative one. The objectives of educative supervision are to promote professional competence, to develop skill and understanding, and to enable the supervisor and student to assess the student’s abilities using a mutual process of giving and receiving feedback on the student’s performance, within the agency’s learning opportunities.

**The Supportive Function**

The supportive function of supervision is an important one and involves the Field Educator helping the student to maintain or enhance their sense of self. The supportive process is one in which the supervisor acknowledges and responds to the student’s emotional needs so far as these relate to their role as a student.

Helping the student to understand the processes of an event and empathising with the student’s emotional reactions validates their feelings and helps to integrate the experience into the context of the student’s professional development.

Supportive supervision takes place in the context of the student’s learning goals for the placement. If a student’s personal difficulties block or negate the learning process and together you are unable to resolve these difficulties, contact with the university liaison person is recommended.

**The Management Function**

The supervisory process also contains a managerial and administrative function. The Field Educator helps the student gain access to information and resources, and ensures their understanding and use of correct procedures within the agency.

It is the Field Educator’s responsibility to ensure that the student’s learning process is consistent with the philosophy of the agency. The field education process must not infringe upon the rights of service users and staff of the organisation.

Duty of care to the service user is the guiding principle for all parties and takes precedence over the provision of learning opportunities for a student.

The three functions of supervision are rarely present in isolation within the supervisory process. For example:

- The process of giving and receiving constructive feedback is both educational and supportive.
- Joint planning to access information and resources is educational, supportive and managerial.
- Mutual de-briefing after an event is both educational and supportive.
9. FIELD EDUCATION POLICIES

RMIT Field Education Policies are guided by the principles and minimum requirements for field education, as laid down in The Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (Association of Social Workers Ltd. January, 2010). These policies are as follows.

9.1 Organisation of Field Education

Persons responsible for the management of the field education program must be social workers. Arranging placements is a four-way consultative process involving the agency, the Field Educator, the student, and field staff. The School must take responsibility for determining the location of the placement, the development of a statement of objectives, the minimum standards that students are required to obtain, the processes expected of each placement, and the final assessment of the student's performance.

Placements will not be approved in agencies where the student has had personal ties as a client, relative or close friend.

9.2 Structure of Field Education Program

The Australian Association of Social Workers stipulates that:

- field education courses must be taken over two years within the social work program
- students must successfully complete a minimum of 140 x seven-hour working days (at least 980 hours) in at least two field education courses
- no placement will be shorter than 40 days
- placement days may vary from five days per week, to a minimum of two days per week
- placements that are two days per week must include at least two full time (five day) block periods
- at least one placement will be in direct practice.

Students on placement should work the normal hours expected of workers in the agency, and therefore they should plan their other responsibilities to allow for this. A typical working day is a minimum of 7.5 hours (half an hour being for lunch break); a half day is equivalent to 3.75 hours.

Students are not entitled to time and a half or double time, which other workers in the agency may receive for working out of hours or on public holidays. For all placement activities, one hour is equivalent to one hour. This also applies to offsite placement activities, camps, etc. Where circumstances require students to work a number of hours above 7.5 hours a day, for example attendance at a camp which requires day and night work, the time accrued should be negotiated between the student, Field Educator and RMIT BSW Field Education coordinator prior to or at the beginning of the placement.

Participation in camps as part of placement will only be approved if the camp is part of the agency program and appropriate student supervision is provided. A request for student attendance as part of field education experience must be provided in writing, signed by the student and field educator, prior to commencement of placement or at least three weeks before the camp will take place.
A student who is unable to engage in their placement for full days \((7\frac{1}{2}\) hours) must state this on their Placement Agreement Form, obtaining approval from the agency supervisor and RMIT field staff to carry out placement in flexible hours.

Students must seek prior approval from their Field Education Coordinator if a flexible time plan (e.g. shorter days or half day attendance) is required. When this negotiated the student must keep a record of hours on placement on a log sheet and submit this, signed by the Field Educator, with their final report. (The log sheet is located under the ‘Forms’ heading on the Field Education website - http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialservices/fieldeducation)

Students are entitled to credit for each public holiday observed by the agency. This applies only to government designated public holidays. Days of agency closure in addition to public holidays (for example between Boxing Day and New Years Day) are not credited. Special arrangements regarding the hours of work within a placement can be negotiated between the student and Field Educator, e.g. students who need to attend medical appointments may be able to arrange to make up the time by coming in early on some mornings, or receive time in lieu for evening meetings.

Students who wish to vary their field education hours should talk with the Field Educator and negotiate agreed upon alternative hours which take account of student needs and agency/field education requirements/priorities in consultation also with the Field Education Year Coordinator.

Student representatives required to attend School or University meetings, may do so during placement time, although this must be negotiated between student and Field Educator. Attendance at Integrative Seminars for all students is part of placement time. Attendance at other BSW courses is not counted as part of placement time.

Students are entitled to two (2) days sick leave. Any extra days or time (i.e. more than two days) missed by the student through illness should be made up. If a student is away for two days or more consecutively owing to illness a medical certificate may be required by the agency. A student may be required to extend the number of days on placement, in consultation with field educator, if certain agreed upon tasks which are the student’s responsibility are awaiting completion.

Information regarding extension of placement time for any reason must be forwarded to the Field Education Coordinator for that year. This is particularly important for insurance reasons.

9.3 Field Educator Requirements

Field Educators are required to be qualified social workers (hold a recognised Social Work Degree and be eligible for AASW membership) with a minimum of two years full time practice experience, who demonstrate a commitment to continuing professional education, and an interest in developing social work knowledge and skills.

9.4 Off-Site Supervision Arrangements

If appropriate learning opportunities can be provided, field placements may be undertaken under the supervision of ‘off-site’ social workers when there are no qualified social workers available in the auspicing agency to supervise. Such arrangement should apply to only one placement and is dependent upon availability of off-site supervision by RMIT social work staff. There is no guarantee that off-site supervision will be provided for individual student placements.
9.5 Supervision Requirements

Field Educators must provide regular formal and informal supervision. Field Educators must be able to provide a minimum of 1.5 hours of supervision (including formal or informal) for every five days of placement. This may be provided individually or in groups. It is expected the field educator will be able to observe the students practice.

9.6 Fields of Practice

The AASW (2008) stipulates that “Students must undertake field placements in at least two different fields of practice and organisations, with different client groups, using different methods of social work practice, and with a different field educator for each placement. (Australian Association of Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards, 4.3.4(a)).

9.7 Field Education Assessment

Clear learning goals, objectives and expected standards of performance must be stated at the commencement of each placement.

The process of assessment should be collaborative, with student, field educator and School representative (liaison person) all involved in evaluating the student's performance. However the final decision rests with the School.

A learning plan must be developed for each placement, indicating how the student will meet the required goals and objectives. As stated previously the Learning Plan should be provided to the liaison person at least three days before the first liaison visit.

Liaison visits by social work staff are necessary to monitor and evaluate the student's progress and to provide consultation as required. There will be a minimum of three contacts including at least one face to face visit. These may include group meetings and tutorials. Telecommunications and video conferencing may be used to supplement site visits but will not replace them.

9.8 Travel

Costs associated with travel to and from placement are the responsibility of the student. It is expected that agencies fully reimburse students for travel costs incurred during the working day for agency purposes. If these funds are unavailable, students should be advised of this by the agency prior to commencement of placement so that the student has the opportunity to decline the placement on the basis of being unable to personally finance such travel.

Students must have a full driver’s licence if they are to drive the agency vehicle. Note that students are not permitted to transport clients in their own private vehicles.

9.9 Police Check

Most departments and organisations require a Police Records Check on potential students, employees and volunteers. Forms with the code and staff signature will be provided by Field Education staff at the Field Education Briefings or may be obtained from reception (building 8, level 7).

If a conviction has been recorded against the student during the past 10 years this will be noted on the record check.
If the agency you are placed with requires any additional police checks it is important to advise RMIT of this ahead of commencing placement so that the processes can begin and not delay placement or restrict tasks able to be undertaken.

9.10 Working with Children Check (WWC Check)

The Working with Children Act 2005 (The Act) requires a person who works or volunteers in connection with certain types of ‘child-related work’ to pass a WWC Check.

RMIT University Social Work, along with many universities/programs, is requiring all students undertaking field education placement to apply for a WWC Check. For students/volunteers the check is free of charge and will remain valid for any voluntary work/student placement for up to five years. A separate check is required for paid employment purposes and a fee is charged for this.

The aim of the new checking system is to help protect children from sexual and physical harm. The Department of Justice administers the checks – website www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren. Please refer to their Information Sheet which should be read with the Application Guide which is attached to the Application Form. Applications are made via Australia Post and more detailed information can be obtained from the DOJ Information Line 1300 652 879.

The WWC Check is different from a police record check in the following ways:

- Not all offences are relevant to the WWC Check. Broadly, the WWC Check will consider serious sexual, violence and drug offences. Offences outside the scope of the Working with Children Act 2005, for example fraud, will not be taken into account when assessing applications for a WWC Check.
- Unlike a police record check, the WWC Check is unique in that it is monitored on an ongoing basis. This means that holders of a WWC Check will continue to be checked for any new relevant offences or findings from professional disciplinary bodies. New charges, convictions, findings of guilt or findings from professional disciplinary bodies which are relevant to your WWC Check will result in a re-assessment of your eligibility for a WWC Check.
- The WWC Check is valid for five years and is transferable when you change employers or volunteer organisations, unless it is revoked or surrendered within that time. An application for a WWC Check is free for volunteers, but cannot be used for paid work.

9.11 Insurance

In order to be covered by insurance, students must submit their placement agreement form to RMIT before commencing placement. On placement, students are required to behave as an employee in relation to accountability of their movements. Students must therefore advise the agency of all field activities which take place outside the office of the agency at which they are located. This is important for insurance purposes and professional accountability.

Students must also advise RMIT if negotiation takes place to extend the date for completing placement beyond that stated on the original Placement Agreement Form.

RMIT has in place the following insurance policies that cover RMIT students while on placement with outside organisations. Certificates of Currency regarding any/each of these policies can be issued on request. The policies and description of cover are:
Student Personal Accident Insurance

The following coverage provided by this policy shall only apply while an insured person is on campus and/or engaged in university/course/sport related activities and/or practical placement or community activities authorized by the University including direct and uninterrupted travel to and from such activities and provided such travel excludes everyday travel to and from the University.

- Non Medicare Medical Expenses (Medical expenses that are not subject to full or partial rebate from Medicare). See the Insurance Policy on the RMIT website for full details 
  http://mams.rmit.edu.au/ige8mct5g0e7.pdf  Excess $50.00.

- Overseas Medical Expenses as a result of sustaining an injury

Public and Products Liability Insurance

Students are covered against their legal liability to pay damages or compensation to others in respect of:

a) Personal Injury; or
b) Damage to property;

which occurs as a result of an incident connected with the Insured’s Business.

Students undertaking overseas placements must also ensure that they are covered by comprehensive travel insurance from the time they depart and during the period of their placement.

Professional Indemnity Insurance

Students are insured for claims made against them for breach of professional duty. It should be noted that negligence is usually decided by a Court of Law.

The above insurance policies are not altered by the fact that the student may or may not receive remuneration in connection with the work placement. However, any student who receives payment through the payroll system of a host organisation may be deemed to be an employee of that host organisation and may be covered under their Work Cover Policy. In this situation, where RMIT has, by agreement, indemnified the host employer, RMIT University’s Liability Insurance for Host Employers covers the student’s liability to indemnify host employers for increased work cover premium due as a result of a compensation injury to a student on practical placement. It covers any location where practical placement students undertake work for host employers.

9.11.1 Accidents on Placement

If students have an accident on placement:

It is important that they inform the Field Educator and liaison person as soon as possible.

Keep a record of dates and all details.

Obtain an official record of the accident, with a medical certificate from the relevant doctor.
The liaison person is required by the University to put a report with details of the accident in the student's file.

As is the case with professional accountability, insurance cover necessitates that the agency has a current record of all student movements in relation to field education activities outside that agency.

If a student becomes concerned on placement about their safety and security they should advise their Field Educator and Liaison person. Further consultation may then take place between the Field Education staff member for that year and the RMIT Insurance Office - http://www.rmit.edu.au/internalaudit/insurance.

9.12 DELAYED, DEFERRED OR EARLY TERMINATED PLACEMENTS

On occasions, students face serious difficulties that mean that they, or teaching staff, consider that they are unable or unready to undertake their field education placement at the usual time. Examples of such situations are:

- where a student has a car accident or serious physical illness which severely limits their capacities for a time-limited period;
- where a student suffers a mental illness;
- where a student from a non-English speaking background has been selected for the program and subsequently found to be needing substantial up-grading in English language skills;
- where students have not completed the required academic work prior to the beginning of placement. (Students and/or staff may request delaying the commencement of placement by a week or two, to enable the student to complete their work).

Usually arrangements to delay placement are worked out by agreement between the student and Field Education Co-ordinator for that year level. The School co-operates with student requests for flexibility in regard to placement dates and times in such special cases. When there is a need to defer or suspend a placement, for example through illness, a Field Education Progress Panel may be convened.

The professional association states that no placement will be less than 40 days. If a placement is terminated at an early stage (i.e. prior to completion of 20 days) due to unforeseen circumstances or student’s decision to withdraw, a Progress Panel may not be necessary. In such instances, credit for any of these days will depend upon evidence of learning provided by student and confirmed by field educator and/or liaison person.

Very occasionally there is a dispute between a student and teaching staff about the student's readiness to undertake field education. In such cases, a Field Education Progress Panel is convened to decide on the appropriate action. (See Section 10.6 - ‘Field Education Progress Panel’ for more details.)

9.13 RURAL PLACEMENTS

In keeping with the School's appreciation of the special features of rural social work, the School may negotiate placements for students in country areas. Alternatively such placements may be arranged following a specific request from students and rural practitioners.
Students will be required to find their own accommodation during the placement, and will normally be required to attend the School for Integrative Seminars.

The requirement to attend integrative seminars may be waived, in full or part, only when the Field Education Co-ordinator is satisfied that sufficient field teaching time and resources at the location of the placement are available to substitute for the seminars.

Placements will be carefully negotiated and conducted as usual although resource restrictions may mean that it is not possible for staff to visit the location of the placement. Liaison may occur through teleconferencing and/or via a local social worker/liaison person.

9.14 INTERSTATE PLACEMENTS

The School recognises the benefits to students of interstate placements if student has good reasons to be situated outside Victoria owing to personal/family circumstances/plans. These may be arranged if a School or Department of Social Work in the relevant state is willing to provide pre-planning, social work supervision and liaison visits.

RMIT social work has been developing opportunities for field education placements in the Northern Territory and a number of students have undertaken their placement in Alice Springs through this arrangement.

9.15 OVERSEAS PLACEMENTS

Global Studies Social Science and Planning

The School is prepared to support a limited number of overseas placements for the final placement with institutions where the Social Work program has reciprocal arrangements. These arrangements depend on the Social Work program’s resources at the time. In addition to the School guidelines and AASW regulations (refer below) the Social Work team have developed criteria specific to overseas social work placements. This draws upon consultation with other schools of social work (particularly the UNSW School of Social Sciences and International Studies Social Work Program), RMIT Education Abroad guidelines for approval to study overseas and previous experience of RMIT Field Education staff in relation to social work student placements in other countries.

RMIT has exchange partnerships with a number of universities in other countries. During the past several years student placements and relationships have been developed by social work staff with social work colleagues at the following institutions: UNIMAS, Malaysia; Miriam College and the University of Philippines in The Philippines and the Centurion School of Rural Enterprise Management in Orissa, India.

Education Abroad advises that the following factors are taken into account regarding approval for RMIT representation by staff and students in other countries.

- A positive or neutral Travel Advisory / rating by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- The proximity of the destination to areas which are rated by DFAT at level 5
- The presence of an Australian Embassy in that country
- The level of support in the host country (e.g. local presence of a partner institution)
- The presence of an RMIT staff member accompanying student/s or based at the destination
The degree of support which the school can/will provide

After consultation with their Field Education Coordinator a student interested in undertaking field education outside Australia should contact Education Abroad for information about those universities with which RMIT University has partnership which offer accredited social work programs as well as information about scholarships, grants and loans available for study abroad. Following recommendation by the Social Work Field Education Team an application for overseas study requires approval by the Dean (Global Studies, Social Science and Planning), Education Abroad and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor International. This process is handled by Study Abroad staff for students who apply for a formal exchange.

AASW

The Australian Association of Social Workers stipulates that fifty per cent of the field education program must be undertaken in Australia. Where placements are taken overseas the following criteria must be met. The AASW regulations for overseas stipulate that:

“Field Educators must have at least two years’ experience and be eligible for membership of either the professional social work association in the country where the placement is undertaken, or the AASW.

University based field education coordinators must be staff members of accredited social work education programs in the country where the placement is undertaken, or members of accredited Australian social work programs”. (Australian Social Work and Accreditation Standards, January 2010, p.17-18, 4.3.4 © (iii), (iv))

Social Work Field Education

Students may be considered for an overseas placement if

- They have completed their previous placement without any concerns in performance having been identified during the placement
- They have completed their previous placement locally
- They have achieved academic grades that approximate a credit average in classroom based practice courses

As indicated in the AASW regulations placements are conditional upon there being supervision and liaison from appropriately qualified local staff (social workers).

Students planning an overseas placement should be able to articulate what they need to learn on placement in another country in terms of social work knowledge and skills. They must be able to say why this experience in another culture is appropriate in terms of acquiring the required knowledge/skills. Moreover students must be financially capable of funding their travel, accommodation and living expenses whilst on placement overseas. Similarly adequate RMIT University social work/field education staff resources are essential to negotiate and maintain appropriate contact with all parties during the placements.

Placement in a country in which RMIT has no formal partnership will only be considered if the general AASW guidelines and RMIT Education Abroad Policy (refer above) can be met and the student has guaranteed safe accommodation, adequate financial resources and personal support in that location.
Preliminary briefings regarding interest in overseas placements are held in the year prior to when to placements would be undertaken. Students planning to undertake their final placement overseas are also required to attend the series of pre placement briefings which take place during first semester.

9.16 Placement in Student’s Place of Employment

The Australian Association of Social Work [AASW] requires that students undertaking an accredited Bachelor of Social Work program complete two field education placements. The nature, time requirements and other characteristics of these placements must be in accordance with AASW guidelines (AASW Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards 2010-Section 4.3 Learning for Practice in Field Education). Ordinarily, both field placements are in a context, organization and field of practice that is different to the student’s place of employment. However, the AASW guidelines (4.3.4b) do allow that this requirement may be waived for one field education placement if the student provides evidence, to the university’s satisfaction, that all other principles and policies of AASW Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards are met. Specific, non-negotiable guidelines to follow in these cases are set out by the AASW. The policy states –

“4.3.4 Location of placements

(a) Minimum Requirements
It is essential that students have the opportunity to participate in a broad range of learning & experiences in field education. In particular students must undertake field placements in at least two different fields of practice and organisations, with different client groups, using different methods of social work practice, and with a different field educator for each placement.

(b) Placements in the student’s place of employment

(i) In order to provide a breadth of experience and to prevent conflicts of interest between employment and education roles, field education placements will be undertaken in a different context, organization and field of practice to the student’s place of employment.

(ii) This requirement may be waived if the university is satisfied that all other principles and policies set out in this document can be met.

(iii) If a placement is undertaken in a student’s place of work, a written agreement signed by the organisation, university and student will be completed. This will include:

○ Agreement that the employee is in a student role whilst on placement and that they are able to meet the educational requirements, principles and policies set out in this document

○ Allocation of learning experiences not involving the student’s routine work responsibilities

○ Protected time whilst on placement that is separate from the duties carried out at work and includes time to complete reading, reflective learning and assessment activities related to the placement

○ Wherever practicable, provision of a field educator who is not the student’s line manager or usual supervisor.” (AASW 2008) “
9.17 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The AASW also provides that in ‘exceptional circumstances’ the student may undertake two field education placements in their place of employment. The AASW requires that *exceptional circumstances* must be defined by the university and be documented in the field education handbook (AASW Australian SW Education and Accreditation Standards, 4.3.4 (b) iv, Mar 2008).

In determining whether to allow or extend exceptional circumstances in these cases the first principle is the continued compliance with AASW accreditation standards. This placement allowance based on exceptional circumstances cannot be extended purely for the convenience of the student, nor can they be allowed where doing so would constitute non-compliance with any provision of the AASW accreditation standards.

Placement allowance based on exceptional circumstances can only be granted in those situations which meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. Where requiring students to undertake one of their field placements outside of their place of employment would constitute a hardship on the student beyond that normally expected or experienced in the course of full time or part time study. Examples of such hardship would be:
   a. Where placements with another organization that provides human service/social work services are not geographically available/accessible.
   b. Where a student’s physical impairment renders conventional participation problematic, e.g., mobility limitations, specialised support or access equipment requirements.

2. Where opportunities to undertake uniquely advantageous field placements present themselves. Examples of such unique or advantageous opportunities would be:
   i. Unique opportunity to participate in unconventional or non-traditional program(s) or setting(s).
   ii. Supervision by nationally or internationally recognised expert(s) in a particular area of social work practice.

Those students wishing to apply for ‘exceptional circumstances’ consideration must submit to the university a formal request in writing, through the BSW Field Education Coordinator, stipulating their reasons for requesting such a consideration, and further describing specific steps, measures and processes which will be taken within the proposed placement to ensure compliance with each of the salient AASW accreditation standards for field education. The request will be assessed by a panel of RMIT social work staff.
9.18 CREDIT TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) IN FIELD EDUCATION

The Australian Association of Social Work (AASW) requires that students undertaking an accredited BSW program complete two field education placements. The nature, time requirements and other characteristics of these placements must be in accordance with AASW Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards 2009 (referred to below as the AASW Accreditation Standards).

AASW Policy

Section 4.3.5 of the AASW Accreditation Standards refers to ‘Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning in Field Education’. It states:

“The AASW recognizes that students may enter their social work degree study program with a breadth of prior learning and experience in the human services sector. The AASW policy for credit transfer and recognition of prior learning is detailed in Part 1, section 7 and 8. The policy as it relates to field education is outlined further below:

(i) Credit for the first field education placement or part thereof, may be possible on the basis of recognition of prior work experience or the completion of field education placements completed prior to entry into the social work program.
(ii) Performance outcomes for first placement based on the AASW Practice Standards and Code of Ethics will be used to assess students for RPL.
(iii) In accordance with the policies in this document credit for the first field education placement or part thereof, will take account of:
   o the currency of the work experience (minimum 5FTE in last 10 years), with a minimum of 3 years practice in a relevant context,
   o the use of social work practice skills such as assessment and counseling
   o familiarity and use of a range of methods such as case work and community work;
   o verification of student’s claim by a qualified social worker who can attest to its accuracy.
(iv) Recognition of Prior Learning for field education must be thoroughly assessed.
(v) In order to be granted RPL for field education the student must provide evidence that they have met the standards and performance outcomes for the first placement. This should include for example, job descriptions accompanied by referee reports; skills assessment and critical reflection on placement or work experience.”

BSW Social Work Program

The RMIT Social Work Program, in implementing the AASW policy has developed the following processes:

1. Any student wishing to have RPL applied for first placement is required to make a formal application for RPL to be considered.
2. The formal application will be submitted to the BSW 3rd year Field Education Coordinator at least one semester prior to the semester in which the student would be enrolled in and undertaking Field Education 1.
RMIT has developed a portfolio assessment process to cover recognition of work experience and will assess students’ claims against the *Learning Objectives for Field Education 1* (see Social Work Field Education 1 Course guide).

The application procedure is to consist of two stages:

**Stage One**
Students should submit a portfolio comprising the following forms of evidence for RPL:

- Overall statement as to why they believe their work experience allows them to meet the Learning Objectives for Social Work Field Education 1.
- Personal details
- Details of relevant work experience (must meet AASW guidelines re minimum 5FTE in last 10 years, with a minimum of 3 years practice in a relevant context). This includes job descriptions and examples from practice.
- Students should argue their case against each of the Learning objectives from FE1, giving examples of their use of social work practice skills such as assessment and counselling and further demonstrating familiarity and use of a range of methods such as case work and community work.
- The student’s claim should be verified by a qualified social worker who can attest to its accuracy.
- The names and contact details of 2 referees are to be provided.

The Portfolio will be assessed by a panel of RMIT social work staff. Students will be required to meet with this panel and should be prepared orally to elaborate upon and if necessary defend their portfolio.

The panel may decide:
- to grant provisional approval of RPL
- to require major or minor revisions to the Portfolio
- to decline approval for RPL

Where provisional approval of RPL is granted, students will be invited to proceed to Stage Two of their application.

**Stage Two**
Students granted provisional approval of RPL should submit:

- A 3,000 word critical reflection on their work experience, demonstrating integration of theory and practice, social work values and ethics (AASW Accreditation Standards Section 7.2.3 refers). The submission should attend to the requirements and assessment criteria of the Case Study component of FE1.

The case study will be assessed by members of the panel.

The panel may decide:
- to grant approval of RPL
- to require major or minor revision to the critical reflection
- to decline approval for RPL
9.19 REPEAT PLACEMENTS

Students have the right to repeat their placement in the same way as they have the right to repeat any course that they have been unable to complete satisfactorily. It is recognised that this is particularly stressful because of the integral nature of field education to professional competence and future employment.

A repeat placement will only be arranged at the direction of the Field Education Progress Panel which will carefully review the situation and the learning needs of the student. It will make recommendations about:

- the length of the placement;
- special learning needs of the student;
- special requirements in relation to field education;
- nature of the learning environment, and appropriate work; and
- the particular information to be passed on to the next Field Educator

Experience has led us to require that significant information concerning the student's progress in the third year placement, and any identified learning needs be passed on to the fourth year placement Field Educator. RMIT staff will endeavour to develop a second placement which offers a student appropriate learning opportunities and skilled field teaching.

9.20 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIELD EDUCATION AND OTHER ACADEMIC COURSES

Difficulties may arise when two separate courses that are undertaken concurrently require practical application. Such is the case for fourth year students in second semester engaged in social research and field education. Fourth year field education projects are likely to focus on either community organisations, program development, policy development or research.

A project undertaken in field education whilst on placement is owned by the agency auspicing the placement. Student involvement arises out of the placement agreement between three main parties: student, agency and university. In field education, access to information for research or any other kind of project, as well as the processes and outcomes belong to the agency/ies auspicing the project. The student is accountable to the placement agency regarding implementation of the project and to the agency field educator and the university for student learning.

Whilst the student is likely to take a lead role in the field project, effective longer term outcomes are dependent upon collective involvement and ownership. Regular reports, verbal and written, formal and informal to task supervisor/Field Educator/s, reference group, committee of management, etc. may be an essential part of the process to ensure ongoing interest and to encourage input and support from others. The extent to which a student may use information from the project outside that agency is a matter to be agreed upon between the student and the agency. The exception to this is in integrative seminars when a student may share, confidentially, information to assist in learning.

To reiterate: The student is accountable to the placement agency regarding the implementation of any project undertaken and to the agency field educator and the university for student learning. The first obligation regarding information, issues and action is consultation with the agency
and/or other parties engaged in the placement. Any issues unresolved would then be taken up with the University.

9.21 IT COMMUNICATION, FIELD EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Students should be aware of confidentiality and not discuss any client related issue on facebook or other medium (e.g. twitter, emails, etc).

Students are not to use face book or other medium (e.g. twitter, email, etc) to make comments regarding any aspect of their field experience or other agency related matters when on placement, or after placement finishes. This also applies when in paid work in the human services.

Any abuse of confidentiality in relation to any work related matter communicated via email or face book is against the professional/ AASW code of ethics. General principles in the AASW Code of Ethics (2010) relating to this issue are that:

- Social workers will respect the rights of clients to a relationship of trust, to privacy and confidentiality of their information and to responsible use of information obtained in the course of professional service (5.2.4)
- Social workers will relate to both social work colleagues and colleagues from other disciplines with respect, integrity and courtesy, seeking to understand differences in viewpoints and practice (5.3.b).
- Social workers will acknowledge and strive to carry out the stated aims and objectives of their employing organisation, agency or service contractor, consistent with the requirements of this Code (5.4.1.a) and that
- Social workers will not engage in, nor accept other staff engaging in, any form of discrimination, abuse, bullying or harassment (5.4.2).
10. THE LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

People learn in different ways. Students and Field Educators need to be reflecting on their own learning styles and together creating a learning environment, learning activities and feedback which are appropriate to the student and the work context.

There are a number of tools to help in this process.

10.1 THE FIELD EDUCATION PLACEMENT AGREEMENT FORM

The BSW Field Education Placement Agreement Form contains details about the focus of the placement, major learning objectives, days and dates during which the placement will be undertaken, nature of supervision agreed upon and the other information relevant to the proposed agreement. This form provides the broad framework for ongoing evaluation and final assessment. This form must be completed and returned to the Social Work Field Education Administrative Staff before the placement commences in order for students to be covered by insurance. A copy of the approved Placement Agreement Form is sent to all parties with confirmation of the placement and name of liaison person.

10.2 THE LEARNING PLAN

All field education students are required to develop a Learning Plan which is a working document put together by the student in conjunction with the Field Educator and reviewed by the liaison person. The learning plan specifies what will be learned, how it will be learned and how it will be known that the learning has occurred. The Field Educator and student will determine the learning goals and tasks for the placement. These will be informed by the prior learning of the student, the resources and focus of the placement agency and the educational objectives of the course. The Learning Plan will cover each of the seven broad Learning Areas and will identify relevant points within each area.

The learning plan is a tool. It is not assessed as such although inevitably the Field Educator will take into account how well the student was able to think through and record what they wanted to learn and how they were going to do this. A draft learning plan must be provided to the liaison person before the first liaison visit. It would also be required if a student was to appear before a Progress Panel.

While the document is compulsory as new goals, areas of activity and learning emerge during placement the learning plan should be modified or extended to incorporate these.


It is important that Field Educators pay close attention to the learning plan; especially selection of appropriate tasks and methods of assessment. They also need to be aware of the relevant standards for each placement.

Refer: The Task Menu and ‘Guidelines to Documenting Evidence of Learning’ at http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialservices/fieldeducation for ideas on documentation which students can use to show evidence of their learning throughout the placement.
Diary/Journal

Whilst on placement, students are encouraged to maintain a journal or diary of their work, thoughts and personal reflection. This may be used in supervision and in the preparation of the final assessment report. See Document 4 for information on writing journals and personal reflections.

10.3 THE EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT PROCESS

As in all courses, students undertaking a Field Education placement are assessed on their performance. Minimum standards of practice competence in the different areas of Field Education activity are identified in the Assessment Guide.

The School's emphasis in evaluation and assessment in field education is on standards negotiated by the student and Field Educator (with assistance from the liaison person). Evaluation and assessment are carried out with reference to learning objectives and minimum standards, which are to be incorporated into the Learning Plan. Assessment can be viewed as both a:

- **process** - of ongoing evaluative feedback, and an
- **event** - that is an assessment of a student's performance in relation to particular criteria at particular points in time.

Ideally, field education assessment is an interactive process between student and Field Educator that is ongoing throughout the placement.

10.4 MID-PLACEMENT REVIEW

When the placement is reaching mid-way stage (around 35 days) student and field educator should review progress in relation to learning goals and tasks (refer Learning Plan mid placement review section), rating the level of performance attained. (Refer: Learning Plan pro formas at http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialservices/fieldeducation). This ensures that the student and Field Educator are aware of the student's progress thus far and allows for a review of the student's learning goals for the remainder of the placement. A copy of the mid placement review must be provided to the liaison person.

At the mid placement review the Field Educator must assess and discuss with the student whether they consider the student is likely to pass or whether extra plans need to be set in place to address difficulties that have arisen. Information about difficulties which have been identified should be communicated to the liaison person.

Where a student's performance is not considered to be of a satisfactory standard, the Mid-Placement Review can be an opportunity to define explicitly the criteria considered necessary to be met, for a student's performance to be assessed as satisfactory. University liaison staff must be informed if this concern exists.

10.5 FINAL ASSESSMENT

The Field Educator and student are asked to submit a final assessment report in consultation with each other and other parties associated with overseeing the student’s performance. The final assessment must contain **a clear statement** as to whether or not the student's performance has been considered satisfactory. Reasons for the decision are required.
This should be completed and signed before the student leaves the agency. Written reports are due at RMIT two weeks after the end of placement and should be submitted to the Program Administrative Officer. Students are unable to pass the field education course until the School has received a satisfactory report from the Field Educator.

### 10.6 FIELD EDUCATION PROGRESS PANELS

When a student's Field Education performance is assessed as unsatisfactory, when an agency terminates the placement before completion, or when a student withdraws from placement before completion, a Field Education Progress Panel will be convened. It provides a forum with due process, to protect both a student's right to fair examination, and also to maintain standards of practice congruent with accredited Social Work programs.

The Field Education Progress Panel is composed of the student concerned, a student support person (optional), the placement liaison person, the Field Educator (and Task Supervisor if involved). It is convened and chaired by the BSW Program Coordinator, the Year Coordinator or the Field Education Coordinator.

**All Field Education results are determined by the Panel on the basis of:**

- the Field Educator's report;
- the liaison person's report;
- the student's self-evaluation report; and
- other relevant documentation regarding the student's placement experience, placement performance and academic background.

**Field Education Progress Panels are also used as forums:**

- to decide on ‘the next steps’ when a placement ‘breaks down’; and
- to decide on the best course of action where there is dispute about a student's readiness for field placement.

**What Happens When a Student is Assessed as Unsatisfactory by the Field Educator's Report?**

Written reports will be required from:

- the Field Educator
- the liaison person and
- the student.

These reports should provide an overview of the placement experience: the student's performance on placement, individual work and goals accomplished, and factors which influenced the early termination of the placement or unsatisfactory result. Each report should also contain recommendations regarding potential outcomes of the progress panel, including the option to continue/extend the placement, additional training/support for the student, suggestions about alternative placement arrangement and areas for particular attention or learning.

- All members of the Field Education Progress Panel receive copies of all documentation prior to the date of the panel.
- The major decision which must be made is whether or not the student has achieved a satisfactory level of performance in view of the evidence provided to the Progress Panel. Staff must decide this in relation to the objectives and criteria for the satisfactory completion of Field Education at the relevant Year level.
Possible outcomes are:

1. *The student's Field Education performance may be assessed by the Panel to be Satisfactory.*

2. *The student may be given a Deferred Result, and be required to undertake an extended placement.* This may take place in the same setting, with the same Field Educator with the agreement of Field Educator and agency.

   This option is followed when it is observed by the Field Educator that the student has begun to make marked progress, but has not made sufficient progress yet to demonstrate satisfactory performance.

   In other circumstances a student may be given an extended placement in a different setting. This is most likely when the Field Educator/student relationship has become problematic, or the student’s identified learning needs are unable to be met in the initial placement environment.

   If the extended placement is in a different setting, it is likely that forty days will be viewed as a minimum time. This is to allow sufficient time for orientation, to maximise student learning in areas that have been problematic, and allow comprehensive assessment of the student’s performance.

3. *The student's performance may be assessed by the Field Education Progress Panel as Unsatisfactory.*

**Appeals Committee**

Students may appeal against decisions made by the Field Education Progress Panel. The responsibility for initiating an appeal rests with the student. The procedure for appeals in Field Education is the same as those for all courses taught by the School.
11. RESOLVING DIFFICULTIES ON PLACEMENT

Issues can arise either within the placement or outside the placement which may impact upon student wellbeing and affect the ability to perform. If this occurs, it is important to acknowledge this. In some instances it may be appropriate, after consultation with field education, liaison person and/or field education coordinator, to request some time out from placement.

11.1 GENERAL STEPS IN RESOLVING DIFFICULTIES

If a Field Educator feels there are problems arising from the student's performance or behaviour on placement, or if students encounter difficulties on placement which they consider are affecting their learning and/or performance, they should be discussed in the first instance with the person concerned.

Express your view of the conflict and feelings about it and at the same time invite the other person to do the same.

Step 1 - Jointly define the conflict.
Step 2 - Communicate positions and feelings.
Step 3 - Communicate co-operative intentions.
Step 4 - Take the other's perspectives.
Step 5 - Communicate motivation to negotiate in good faith.
Step 6 - Reach an agreement (Johnson & Johnson, 1987).

If this is a problem, or if the issue cannot be resolved, then the liaison person should be consulted. As far as possible, the resolution of difficulties will be attempted through a three-way discussion between Field Educator, liaison person and student.

Decisions to prematurely terminate a placement should be made only in the presence of the Field Educator, student and a School representative (i.e. the Field Education Coordinator for that year). This courtesy is requested of all parties because placements are basically an inter-organisational arrangement between the School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning and the agency.

11.2 COMMON EXAMPLES OF DIFFICULTIES ON PLACEMENT

Example 1 – ‘Personality Clash’ or poor communication between student and Field Educator

It is our experience that with the negotiated placement planning process, the likelihood of this difficulty arising is minimised. If it does occur, it is useful to ‘put it on the table’ at a liaison visit or raise with the liaison person outside of the visit. The liaison person, in the role of mediator, can assist in clarifying the issues and points of difference, and assist in identifying common ground as a basis for working together.

Example 2 - Student is critical of agency work practices or ethics

There are both content and process issues in this type of situation.

Regarding content, it is helpful if the Field Educator can clarify the history and purposes of agency practices. The professional Code of Ethics can also be used to clarify and discuss
concerns about agency practices. The School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning encourages students to follow the AASW Code of Ethics as a guide to their professional practice. Hopefully, a field-teaching climate will exist in which the student and Field Educator can freely discuss, debate and explore the merits and limitations of agency practices.

Regarding process, sometimes it's not ‘what’ criticisms are made but ‘how’ they are conveyed which causes tensions. Students, Field Educators and liaison staff can use this for learning about processes for making constructive criticisms, which can be ‘heard’ by agency staff.

**Example 3 - Field Educator has too little time and student never sees him or her**

It can be helpful to workout and block out a schedule of times for field educator and student to meet weeks in advance. Plan how these will be used in order to make the most of the time you have together. If a Field Educator finds that they cannot commit the time to a student as planned, it would be helpful if s/he nominates another Field Educator who is more accessible to the student. Where there is not another social worker available, a task supervisor could be considered to assist with general support and day to day tasks. The Field Education coordinator that year at RMIT should be contacted to discuss off-site supervision arrangements if you are unable to work out something with the agency.

**Example 4 - Insufficient suitable work**

Sometimes this arises because an aspect of agency work is particularly complex or unforeseen changes arise in the learning opportunities available. Tasks and activities, graduated in difficulty, should be sought for the student. It is important that giving a student their own workload is not delayed too long, because:

- valuable practice learning time is lost; and
- the student's anxiety can increase further.

Sometimes this concern arises because students are being consistently asked to undertake routine ‘administrative’ or office tasks. You can consider arranging for the student to gain some experience with another worker and/or another part of the agency.

This situation may also arise because a student is not taking the initiative as expected, or is losing contact with service users because of her or his practice difficulties. If this is the case, they should be clearly identified and relevant learning situations sought. Co-counseling or sitting in on a student's group or project meeting can assist the Field Educator to identify clearly ‘what is going wrong’, and what might be a more positive and constructive way to work.

An early liaison visit should be called. If suitable work cannot be negotiated, an alternative placement can be sought.

**Example 5 - Student not coping or succeeding with placement tasks**

It is helpful if the Field Educator can gain sufficient access to the student's work to pinpoint clearly for the student what is going wrong, what can be changed, and what needs to be learned to achieve positive outcomes. The more specific these can be, the more likely it is that the student can understand what is of concern and can practise other behaviours.

Over-generalised criticisms just raise students’ anxieties. Often negative criticisms can be heard best in the context of feedback about strengths and positive achievements.
Field Educators can gain access to student's performance by:

- Observation (e.g. ‘sitting-in’ on an activity);
- Audio-taped record (with service user's permission);
- Process record or diary/journal, written by student just after activity; and
- Joint work.

The liaison person can be called in to a three-way discussion which attempts to ‘partialise the problem’, and to identify: the details of difficulties; objectives to be achieved in relation to a particular difficulty; and what can be done to achieve these objectives?

**Example 6 - Difficulties between students on placement (in pairs or groups)**

The first step in this situation is for the students to acknowledge the difficulties between themselves and discuss these with the Field Educator.

The Field Educator, acting in a role of mediator, can assist in clarifying the points of difference, common ground, and then facilitate the students negotiating a common basis for agreement and moving ahead.

If the Field Educator feels too partisan to act as mediator, or if a student perceives the Field Educator to be ‘too partisan’, anyone involved can initiate a liaison visit, as a further attempt to mediate.

**Example 7 - Student's personal problems interfering with placement work**

Any such difficulties should first be acknowledged and/or ‘named’ in discussion between student and Field Educator.

If either party feels uneasy about doing this, each is free to explore a process for doing so in a discussion with the liaison person. The liaison person will encourage the student or Field Educator to put the concern ‘on the table’ for discussion, with or without the liaison person being present. Options in this situation are clarified in discussion. For example:

A student may be given time out of placement (to be made up later);
The perceived ‘problems’ may be identified to be about conflicting attitudes or values between student and Field Educator; or
A placement may be terminated if the difficulties are agreed to be severely limiting the student's performance.

Field Educators should not engage in personal counseling or therapy with students for their personal problems.

**Example 8 - Student ‘not fitting in’ to agency**

Again, the important process here is to identify the details of the claim in order to separate the personality of the students from the real issues that they may be raising about the agency. Once the issues are identified, you can begin to work out some steps towards overcoming them. This can occur in a liaison visit if it is considered helpful. This may be related to different expectations which need to be discussed and resolved.
Example 9 - Field Educator becomes ill or leaves unexpectedly

As field placements are inter-organisational arrangements between agencies and the School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning, if a Field Educator becomes ill or leaves unexpectedly, an alternative Field Educator should be negotiated with the RMIT Field Education coordinator for that year.

If it is not possible to organise another Field Educator, and the unexpected change occurs early in a placement, the liaison person and RMIT Field Education Coordinator for that year will seek an alternative placement.

If the change occurs halfway through or late in placement, and the agency cannot find either an onsite or offsite Field Educator, the liaison person will seek a supervisor through RMIT Social Work or another agency.

Example 10 – Student practices unhealthy or unclear boundaries.

As our ways of communicating change, many boundaries need to be redefined and/or redrawn, for example the case where a student was talking and communicating with clients via their face-book pages.

It is important to discuss and be aware very early on in the placement of what is expected in terms of agency boundaries. What are the agency protocols about socialising with clients? Socialising with other staff members? Students need to ensure, for example, that their face book page is set on the highest level of privacy settings, to avoid clients looking them up and inviting them to become their ‘friends’ or to access personal information about students.

11.3 SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

In order to develop an appropriate learning and working environment, Field Educators, School staff and students should be aware and knowledgeable about what constitutes sexual harassment and discrimination, relevant legislation, and procedures to follow in cases of sexual harassment and discrimination.

The Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995 declares sexual harassment and discrimination to be unlawful. RMIT University has two policies, the RMIT University Sexual Harassment Policy and RMIT University Equal Opportunity Policy (2005) that cover all students and staff in education and employment. Included here is a summary of the policies’ key features.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment covers a range of deliberate or unintentional verbal and physical behaviours of a sexual nature which is unwelcome, unsolicited and not reciprocated. It does not have to be repeated to constitute sexual harassment. Acts like leering, displays of offensive pictures and written material, sexual body gestures, verbal comments, sexual innuendo, offensive jokes, subtle or explicit pressure for sexual activity and physical contact such as pinching, patting, hugging and brushing against another person’s body and molestation may constitute sexual harassment if they cause another person to feel offended, intimidated or humiliated.
Sexual harassment may occur:

- where a person uses, implicitly or explicitly, coercive sexual behaviour to control, influence or affect the career, salary or job or academic prospects of another person over whom they exert actual or perceived authority;
- between staff and students; or
- amongst colleagues, peers or co-workers.

**Discrimination Policy**

Discrimination on the basis of age impairment, industrial activity, lawful sexual activity, marital status, physical features, political belief or activity, pregnancy, race, religious belief or activity, sex, status as a parent or carer or personal association is prohibited.

**Procedure**

People who feel that they have been sexually harassed or discriminated against are given a range of choices as to what action they can take. If this occurs whilst on placement, the first person to confide in would be the liaison person.

The following options are outlined in University guidelines:

Complainants can have their case heard *informally* by talking to the Executive Officer of Student Affairs or Equal Employment Opportunity Office. Information and confidential advice is also available from the following people: Sexual Harassment Contact Officers, SUC Student Rights Officers and Women’s Officers, staff unions, the Student Sexual Harassment Complaints Officer, International Student Advisors, the Centre for International Students and Scholars, and the RMIT Health Service.

Their main brief is to ensure that the offending or discriminatory behaviour ceases. All complaints are treated seriously, confidentially and promptly. The policy also emphasises protection for the complainant against victimisation for making a complaint. Following initial advice and information, a complaint may be made.

If the informal process is unsuccessful in resolving the complaint, then complainants have the right to go to a *formal procedure*. They can, if they wish, also totally bypass the informal and go straight to the formal procedure.

Complainants may also take complaints directly to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission on (03) 9281 7100.
SOCIAL WORK
FIELD EDUCATION 1
(HWSS 1137)

Assessment Guide
12. FIELD EDUCATION 1 PLACEMENT DETAILS

12.1 LENGTH AND TIME OF PLACEMENT

70 days, usually in semester 2, June/July – November/December.

12.2 FOCUS OF PLACEMENT

BSW Field Education 1 is directed towards preparing students for effective beginning professional practice in social work with individuals, families and small groups. Although the focus is on direct service, students are also expected to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the services offered to service users, the programs, policies, organisation, administration and community context of the agency, as well as the broader structural factors affecting the distribution of power and resources in society.

12.3 SOCIAL WORK CAPABILITY

At the completion of this course you will have the capacity to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Graduate Attribute</th>
<th>Specific attributes</th>
<th>Achieved in HWSS1137</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Apply the knowledge and practice skills to work with and for society’s most vulnerable and marginalised individuals, families, groups and communities</td>
<td>1.1. Apply social work practice knowledge and skills for individual, interpersonal, group, family, organisational, community and policy practice 1.2. Demonstrate a moral and political sensibility oriented towards the attainment of social justice and human rights particularly for vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people 1.3 Demonstrate an awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability for the wellbeing particularly of vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Analyse issues of social disadvantage, oppression and marginalisation from a socio-political and economic framework recognising the impact of capitalism on social relations</td>
<td>2.1 Demonstrate the critical analytical capacity towards the phenomena of social stratification, capitalism, and economic globalisation. 2.2 Demonstrate an understanding of the psychological, emotional and physical impact of these phenomena on individuals, families, groups and communities</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Promote social justice and human rights within a global and international perspective</td>
<td>3.1 Demonstrate an understanding of social justice and human rights from a global and international perspective 3.2 Demonstrate knowledge about developments in the global environment impacting on the wellbeing of for vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people, and on social work.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Where appropriate apply these frameworks in contexts of practice with global and international dimensions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Understand the strengths and limits of the state’s policy, legislative and institutional arrangements on the context and practices for addressing social disadvantage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of the policy, legislative and institutional arrangements of government.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Demonstrate an awareness of how these impact on the wellbeing (or otherwise) of vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate critical analytical skills to evaluate developments in these in relation to vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Acquire relevant interdisciplinary knowledge required for practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate awareness of knowledge of the cognate disciplines (psychology, sociology, political science, economics, sustainability)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Demonstrate a capacity to apply this knowledge to both analysis and practice</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Apply interdisciplinary knowledge and skills in range of practice settings reflecting the contexts and challenges of contemporary social work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate the dispositions of adaptiveness, flexibility, creativity, critical reflexivity and enterprise.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of the contemporary context of practice and the challenges arising.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of indigenous issues and associated practices.</td>
<td>Maybe*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of international social work practice</td>
<td>Maybe*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* dependent upon agency context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Apply their knowledge and practice skills in a manner that confronts structural disadvantage arising from cultural and religious difference, patriarchy, racism, disability, age and discrimination on the basis of sexual preference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of the dimensions of disadvantage</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Demonstrate ability to apply this knowledge to practice</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Demonstrate skills in constructive confrontation, negotiation, conflict management and resolution</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Demonstrate a capacity to work strategically</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Develop and sustain the attributes of personal resilience and hope.</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Recognise and work constructively with power differentials between human service organisations, practitioners and vulnerable marginalised individuals, families, groups and communities</td>
<td>8.1 Demonstrate awareness of personal strengths and limitations as well as a cultural awareness of self 8.2 Demonstrate the capacity for critical reflexivity 8.3 Demonstrate a capacity to employ personal strengths to achieve negotiated social work goals in different contexts. 8.4 Awareness of and capacity to proactively use self as a change agent 8.5 Demonstrate skills in individual and system advocacy 8.6 Demonstrate an understanding of power, its effects and consequences, and its dynamics</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Promote ethical, respectful, accountable and transparent practice processes</td>
<td>9.1 Demonstrate an understanding of social work as a practical-moral activity guided by professional ethics 9.2 Demonstrate an understanding of human rights 9.3 Demonstrate a capacity to use both frameworks in ethical reasoning and decision making</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Participate robustly in contemporary and changing ideological and political debates impacting on society, in an informed, flexible and grounded manner.</td>
<td>10.1 Demonstrate a commitment to ongoing advocacy and political activism on the part of vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people 10.2 Demonstrate a capacity to undertake research on behalf of vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people 10.3 Demonstrate a commitment to strengthening and sustaining civil society</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 11. Engage in life-long learning and on-going professional development. | 11.1 Demonstrate an appreciation of the centrality of ongoing and sustained engagement with literature and other information which enriches practice, especially that with vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people 11.2 Commit to and engage in and with professional supervision 11.3 Demonstrate a willingness and capacity to use information & communication technologies, and to overcoming the digital divide 11.4 Demonstrate a commitment to practice research, especially that which promotes the participation of and well being of vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people | X
|
12.4 PLACEMENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Performance in field education will be assessed using the framework of seven core learning areas, agreed upon by the Combined Schools of Social Work (refer below). This framework was developed with reference to the AASW practice standards and provides detailed information on core learning objectives applicable across all forms of social work practice. RMIT uses this framework to specify learning outcomes for field education in a way that is designed to be concrete and understandable to both students and field educators and which can be applied to a range of settings.

After the completion of both Field Education 1 and Field Education 2 students will have demonstrated capability across all seven areas of assessment and be able to perform at least at the level appropriate to a newly graduating social work practitioner.

A rating scale that identifies level of achievement against each of the 7 core learning areas will be used to assist students and field educators to assess the level of the student’s performance. This scale is designed for the purpose of indicating minimum standards expected for field education 1 and 2. It is holistic in nature, providing a broad rating against each of the core learning areas.

The scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Capable</td>
<td>Level 0</td>
<td>Performance not at basic level expected. Poor understanding of requirements. Practice unsafe or inappropriate. Knowledge or skills undeveloped. Little application to learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Capability</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Performance not yet capable. Some requirements understood. Further work needed to demonstrate beginning capability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Capability</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Performance at beginning level expected. Requirements understood. Practice capable under close guidance and supervision. Limited adaptability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Capable</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Performance beyond level expected of newly qualifying practitioner. High levels of independence. Engages strongly in critical reflexivity. Exhibits ethical fluency. Generates new understandings or practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to be assessed</td>
<td>U/A</td>
<td>The work has either not been undertaken, or the supervisor has not had an opportunity to assess capability in this area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the conclusion of field education 1 (placement) student must at least reach a level of beginning capability (level 2) for all 7 areas, appropriate to the setting by the end of the placement. In order to demonstrate this and maximise their learning students will have, together
with their field educator developed a learning plan that identifies tasks and ways to measure them against each of the 7 broad learning areas.

13.5 PLACEMENT CORE LEARNING AREAS

Learning Area 1 - Values, ethics and professional practice:

Awareness of contextually relevant ethics in accordance with the AASW Code of Ethics and Practice Standards.

1.1 – Demonstrates an awareness of the relevance of the AASW Code of Ethics and Practice Standards within the placement setting (e.g. promotion of social justice and commitment to the dignity, value and uniqueness of individuals, social units, communities and cultures).

1.2 – Demonstrates an understanding of power relationships and structures that can give rise to and perpetuate relationships of inequality and social marginalisation for the target population, and demonstrates an ability to work constructively with issues of power and authority.

1.3 - Maintains an open and respectful perspective towards the values, views and opinions of others and is able to seek to incorporate notions of individual rights and needs, and collective responsibilities.

1.4 - Demonstrates an ability to recognise and understand one's own assumptions and values and their ability to impact on practice (especially within situations of conflicts of values and interest).

1.5 - Demonstrates an understanding of social work as a profession and how it differs from other related professions.

1.6 – Demonstrates an understanding of issues such as privacy and confidentiality in relation to the ethical management of client records, including relevant legislation and agency policies.

Learning Area 2 - Organisational context:

An understanding of the organisational, legal and political contexts of human services processes.

2.1- Demonstrates an understanding of the local and wider context in which the organisation operates (in particular the direct practice and social policy priorities of people living in the local region).

2.2 - Demonstrates an appreciation of the connection between individual problems, public issues and structural disadvantage.

2.3 - Demonstrates an awareness of and adherence to the organisational policies and procedures relating to workplace health and safety, risk management, and duty of care obligations to consumers. This includes awareness of Human Rights and other legal obligations.
Learning Area 3 - Use of knowledge in practice:

An understanding of theories and methodologies relevant to practice and ability to reflect critically upon their use and application.

3.1 - Able to identify a range of social work theories relevant to the practice setting.

3.2 - Able to articulate the relationship between theory and social work practice within the practice setting.

3.3 – Able to articulate the relationship between theory and social work practice at a macro-level (e.g. community & societal implications).

Learning Area 4 - Processes, skills and relationships:

An ability to form constructive relationships with individuals, groups and communities including user groups, colleagues, professionals and people in other significant roles / positions.

4.1 - Communication Skills:

4.1.1 - Demonstrates clear and effective interpersonal communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal) with individuals, groups and communities.

4.1.2 - Able to conduct single or joint interviews and demonstrates the ability to practice strategically (to engage, mobilise, challenge and encourage people in the change process).

4.1.4 – Able to deal with situations involving anger, conflict and challenging behavior.

4.1.5 – Able to write analytically and to distinguish between fact and opinion.

4.1.6 – Able to incorporate formal knowledge and professional principles into documentation.

4.1.7 – Able to prepare written assessment reports that demonstrate the ability to gather relevant information about and with the client/group/or community.

4.1.8 – Able to use information technology for recording information, word-processing and data analysis.

4.1.9 - Adheres to documented policies within the agency: necessary recording processes – reports, assessment schedules, administrative Documentation, statistical procedures, letters, etc.

4.2 - Assessment, Intervention, Referral and Evaluation:

4.2.1 – Able to undertake an assessment of individuals and groups across a diverse range of life circumstances.

4.2.2 - Able to use relevant organisational assessment and referral frameworks

4.2.3 - Demonstrates understanding of both formal and informal methods for evaluating Social Work interventions and ability to articulate these to both service user and supervisor.
4.2.4 - Able to implement the intervention plan, engaging in activities such as: facilitation, mediation, negotiation and advocacy on behalf of service users; counseling, education and skills transference; coordination and liaison with other service providers (in collaboration with the client/service user); crisis intervention; working with an interpreters.

4.2.5 - Able to implement strategies to support and assist clients to find new ways of coping.

**4.3 - Group & Team-work Skills:**

4.3.1 - Demonstrates an understanding of group processes within organisational groups and committees, consumers, consumer groups and authority figures.

4.3.2 - Demonstrates capacity to work collaboratively with colleagues and/or team members in task-focused work groups, committees, and networks.

4.3.3 - Demonstrates the skills required to achieve the balance necessary for the efficient and effective chairing of productive meetings.

4.3.5 – Demonstrates an ability to participate in the management of meetings through assuming formal roles, e.g. secretary/scribe, note-taker, chairperson.

4.3.6 - Demonstrates ability to co-ordinate and liaise when necessary with other service providers, in collaboration with the client/service user.

**Learning Area 5 - Self learning and professional development:**

The ability to take responsibility for one’s own learning and development, and to perform at a level of competence appropriate to a beginning social work practitioner, including the skills to manage one’s future career and the transition from university to professional practice.

5.1 - Demonstrate the ability to participate proactively in negotiating and developing the supervisory relationship.

5.2 - Demonstrate an ability to formulate and articulate one’s own learning needs and objectives.

5.3 - Demonstrate a willingness to take risks and expose own practice for scrutiny from supervisor (and other team members).

5.4 - Demonstrate an awareness of personal feelings and experience and how these affect practice.

5.5 - Demonstrate understanding of the theory of critical reflection & an ability to use this approach to critically examine own practice.

5.6 - Demonstrate the capacity to work with increasing autonomy and professional responsibility.

5.7 - Identify areas for future learning & development & recognise the importance of future professional development as a social worker.

5.8 - Ability to demonstrate appropriate responsibility, accountability, reliability and initiative within the work setting.
Learning Area 6 - Research:

Recognition of research as an integral part of social work practice; demonstrating knowledge and understanding of all types and stages of social research.

6.1 - Demonstrates an understanding of how research knowledge informs practice (e.g. consulting published literature).

6.2 - Able to locate literature relevant to practice area (evidence-informed practice)

6.3 - Able to identify researchable topics/issues within practice setting

6.4 - Able to conduct research and program evaluation using sound methodological approaches (If placement includes a research or evaluation project)

6.5 - Demonstrates an ability to seek out and establish collaborative partnerships (networks) with others working in the field or related fields, in order to obtain relevant information

Learning Area 7 - Social policy:

To have an understanding of the legislative and social policies which influence the different fields of practice including knowledge of relevant legislative and policy frameworks.

7.1 – Able to identify relevant legislation, policies and regulations relevant to practice area and whether these are consistent with social work values and principles

7.2 – Able to analyze the impacts of relevant legislation, policies and regulations on practice

7.3 – Demonstrates an understanding of current debates, social issues and/or politics which impact on the field of practice

7.4 – Demonstrates an ability to understand policy development, community and political processes involved in linking direct practice experience with broader social change objectives.

12.6 ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

In order to pass Social Work Field Education 1 students must demonstrate:

• Attendance at pre placement briefings

• Participation in integrative seminars whilst on placement

• Satisfactory completion of the 70 Day Field Placement, or equivalent. This requires the satisfactory completion of the Learning Plan, including and Mid and End of Placement Reviews. (The Placement Report is central to this requirement)

• Satisfactory completion of an evaluation report on placement performance (Final Report)

• Satisfactory completion of a Case Study -3,000 words. Submitted within 2 weeks of end of the placement.
The Field Education course is not graded beyond Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory. In order to obtain a Satisfactory result, all components of the assessment must be passed.

12.7 MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR FIELD EDUCATION 1

By the end of Field Education 1, field educator and student should be satisfied that the student has demonstrated beginning capability, appropriate to the placement setting, in all 7 learning areas of assessment. In order to demonstrate this and maximise their learning students will have, together with their field educator developed a learning plan that identifies tasks and ways to measure them against each of the 7 broad learning areas.

12.8 GUIDE TO PREPARING FINAL REPORT (FE1)

The final report should be completed by student and Field Educator and signed before the student leaves the agency. Where more than one Field Educator is engaged with the student, the written report requires input from all parties. The lead role in the initial report writing is negotiable and may be undertaken by the student, Field Educator or task supervisor. If the lead role is undertaken by the Field Educator, it is important that the task supervisor/s contribute to Section E of the report.

Student results cannot be finalised until the School has received the field education assessment report, signed by the Field Educator and student. We request prompt attention to this matter.

The report is due at RMIT two weeks after the end of placement. It may be hand-delivered to the Social Work Field Education Administrative Staff, or if mailing, refer to the address on page 1 of this manual and address it to the attention of the Social Work Field Education Administrative Staff. The report then goes to the Field Education Coordinator, who makes the final decision on a student's result. The final report is kept on the student’s file.

Students and Field Educators are required to keep a copy of the report before it is submitted.


**Section A 1 : FACTUAL SUMMARY OF PLACEMENT**

Student Name
MSW or BSW (delete one)
Field Education 1 or 2 (delete one)
Placement Agency
Field Educator (Qualified SW)
Task Supervisor (if any)
Liaison Person
Commencement Date: ____/____/____ Completion Date: ____/____/____

Full-time __ Part-time__ Number of days per week ___

Brief Description of Agency or Program Focus
Brief Summary of Placement Tasks

Brief Summary of Student’s Key Learning Goals for this Placement

Section A 2: COMPLETED LEARNING PLAN

The original Learning Plan should be attached as Appendix, with each section of the Mid Placement Review and Final Report completed and signed by Student, Field Educator and, if appropriate Task Supervisor.

Section B: THE FIELD EDUCATOR’S REPORT

The Field Educator should provide a summary of
(a) the areas of performance in which student has shown development in this placement and
(b) the areas of performance in which further development is needed. Specific details of performance against the seven learning areas will be contained in the latest version of the learning plan, also signed by student, field educator and task supervisor (where applicable).

A statement on the overall level of performance demonstrated by the student on placement, specifically:
(a) whether performance is considered SATISFACTORY or UNSATISFACTORY, and
(b) whether or not the student is considered ready to enter practice as a social worker (if final year/FE 2 placement).

This section should be signed by both the student and Field Educator, to ensure that the student has been it, and that there has been opportunity for discussion of its content. The student’s signature does not necessarily meant agreement with the content – but that s/he has seen the report.

Section C: FIELD EDUCATOR’S /TASK SUPERVISORS COMMENTS on the FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM.

Please provide feedback on Field Education Program in regard to:

1. Structure and timing of placement
2. Value of liaison contact with School staff
3. Value of Field Educators’ sessions at RMIT
4. Resources provided by the University
5. Usefulness of assessment guide
6. General comments on Field Education program.

Future Planning:

Would you be prepared to field teach a RMIT student next year? If so, do you have a preference for a particular program and/or year?

Any other comments to aid future planning?

Section D: STUDENTS COMMENTS On The Placement and Field Education Course

This section is compulsory and is seen as an integral part of the overall report. It is to be written by the student.
Students should comment on:

1. Opportunities offered by the placement
2. Personal development in the agency
3. How the placement has helped to integrate theory and practice
4. Other areas of knowledge and skills which were improved in this placement
5. Thinking ahead to the future, areas of knowledge and skills to be developed
6. Comments/feedback regarding the Field Education program (liaison meetings, integrative seminars, briefings, resources etc.)
7. Other comments.

This section should be signed by both the student and Field Educator, to ensure that the student has seen it, and that there has been opportunity for discussion of its content. The student’s signature does not necessarily mean agreement with the content - but that s/he has seen the report.

Section E: OTHER WORKER’S Comments on Student’s Performance

Completion of this section is optional. It allows for additional formal comments to be made concerning the student’s performance by a worker (other than the Field Educator or Task Supervisor) and/or service users with whom the student has had frequent contact in relation to their Field Education experience. (The Section B outline can be used as a guideline for completion of this section).

Submissions for inclusion in this section of the report must be received by the Field Educator in time for the Field Educator to include them in the report. This section must be signed by the ‘other worker/service user’, the Field Educator and the student.

Section F: APPENDICES

Attach evidence of work undertaken if applicable. If you have completed a report or product while on placement, the Program Administrative Officer would be grateful for a copy. Student work is extremely useful in promoting field education and it assists students undertaking field placements in future. Please ensure that you have the agency’s permission before attaching a copy of any work undertaken. Every care should be taken to delete any identifying details, to ensure confidentiality.

Signatures

________________________    _________________ (date)
Field Educator

________________________    _________________ (date)
Task Supervisor (where applicable)

________________________    _________________ (date)
Student

NOTE: A report cannot be formally acknowledged unless it contains the signatures of Student, Field Educator and other workers where applicable.
12.9 FIELD EDUCATION 1 CASE STUDY OUTLINE

The Case Study is a major requirement of third year and a pass in this assessment component is necessary to pass Field Education 1. The Case Study focuses on a student’s work with an individual, a family or a group. It should be a detailed report describing the individual/family/group and their contexts, together with the student’s thinking and action. It will also be a tool to assist students in the process of reflecting on and assessing their own practice.

One aim of the case study is for students to reflect on what they actually thought and did (their ‘theory-in-use’) and consider what assumptions, values and practice models or concepts were underlying their thoughts, feelings and behaviour in relation to the person/s. A good case study does not necessarily depend on a good piece of intervention or a long and ‘involved’ case, but rather on the student’s analysis of the situation and of their work. In fact it is difficult to write a case study involving a lot of information and activity, and students are advised to select a simple, rather than a complex case. Students should discuss the selection of an appropriate case with their Field Educator early on in their placement.

Educational Goals of the Study

The case study is intended to develop and demonstrate the student’s ability:

- to gather and describe key factors in the situation;
- to describe their actual thinking and intervention in relation to the situation;
- to reflect on their actual practice and identify the various professional and personal components. These include:
  - the student’s values and ideologies
  - the assumptions and conceptual frameworks related to understanding
  - the behaviour of individuals, families and groups, including the
  - influence of broader social structures and ideologies
- to evaluate their actual practice.

Confidentiality and Permission

Preparation of the case study raises ethical questions such as confidentiality and permission of the service-user. Identifying material such as names, addresses (and anything else as relevant) must be altered to protect service-user confidentiality, and this alteration clearly stated. Seeking the permission of the service-user may be appropriate, and you should discuss this with your Field Educator. See Section 5 for guidelines on retaining confidentiality.

Assessment Criteria

The following criteria will be used for assessment of the case study:

a) Evidence of ability to provide a comprehensive and focused description of a case.

b) Evidence of ability to assess the presenting and ongoing situation and describe the elements of implementation.

c) Evidence of ability to reflect on the student’s actual ‘theory-in-use’, and the influence of their values and assumptions and those arising from related conceptual frameworks.

d) Evidence of utilisation of and reference to appropriate literature.
Grading

The case study will be graded as satisfactory/not satisfactory/re-write and will be assessed by the student’s Integrative Seminar tutor according to the above criteria.

Length

3,000 words.

Due Date

The case study is due two weeks after completion of placement. If an extension is required, the student must contact their Integrative Seminar tutor responsible for marking the Case Study and submit the appropriate extension form. The Case Study should be submitted to the Program Administrative Officer (8.7.1) where it will be officially stamped and forwarded to the Field Education Coordinator who will refer it to the relevant tutor.

Structure of Case Study

The following outline provides some guidelines for the case study and lists the major areas to be covered in the case study. It has been prepared so that it can apply to work with individuals or with families or groups from a wide variety of agencies and contexts. Therefore not every part will be relevant to the case study situation, and students will need to decide which issues are relevant. If a small group has been chosen for the case study, you will need to develop an appropriate structure with your Integrative Seminar tutor.

The case study should read as a story, forming a coherent whole that considers a person, family or group, their situation and what brought them to the agency, your involvement and interventions/s and what happened. Theory from HWSS1135 and 1136 and other core social work courses and electives should be woven throughout the case study, or you can tell the story then deconstruct it according to the theory. As always, we want you to be critical in your analysis of what is useful, applicable from the theory you have studied in the program as well as demonstrating your additional learning on site in your placement.

Please ensure the case study reads logically (e.g. sequentially) and is not repetitive. You may include as appendices any letters or other forms of interventions that illustrate your application of theories in practice e.g. a narrative type letter used as case notes.

As a student on placement you have a unique opportunity to analyse, question, read and think through theory and practice with the benefit of your learning in class and supervision on placement. Some student’s case studies have been published as journal articles and this is an option you may want to consider in conjunction with your supervisor and Integrative Seminar facilitator who marks your work. In this case, you may want to look at the way your chosen journal want articles formatted (usually described inside the back cover of the journal) and use this format from the beginning.

Introduction

The introduction should introduce the client or clients, their life situation and why they came to the agency. Include a brief outline and critique of the agency setting (organisational structure and function), and your role on placement, as well as a brief statement describing why you chose this particular case.

Identifying Data

A case study should begin with basic information about key participants in the case, including a genogram and ecomap if necessary, identifying the connections between people. You need to
identify the date they first came to the agency, the referral source and other significant people or agencies involved.

**Engagement**
Describe the strategies/procedures you used to engage the client/s and the steps you took to make contact with other relevant people. You can analyse the nature of the working relationship, including reference to issues of authority, control and expectations.

**Assessment**
Most agencies expect some form of client assessment. This part of the case study focuses on any formal written assessment you wrote and may be incorporated into the case study or attached as an appendix if you have covered the ideas elsewhere. (Assessment is of course a process that continues throughout your contact.).

The particular information and analysis that is relevant will vary according to the service-user/s, the situation and the agency context. The following outline is prepared as a guide - you may like to use it as a checklist. You do not need to complete all the details in the outline. Provide a composite picture using relevant data.

a) **Family Background** This should cover information and analysis of the individual or family background in the immediate situation and past history, as relevant.

**Context** (social, economic and political dimensions):
- influence of broad social context on this individual/family, e.g. class, ethnicity, gender
- influence of dominant beliefs/ideology, e.g. gender roles
- influence of specific socio-economic factors, e.g. illness
- injury, bereavement, migration, unemployment, war
- influence of the neighbourhood context.

How does the past influence the present?

**Family** (structure, organisation and functioning):

This will be more detailed where the focus of intervention concerns family relationships.

- Family structure and boundaries: family system, sub-systems and boundaries (external and internal); clarity and permeability of boundaries.
- roles: marital; parental; instrumental and affective; how allocated; power, authority, decision-making: by whom, over whom, how organised.
- communication patterns: direct or indirect; clear or unclear; patterns of relationships and involvement; exclusion and scape-goating.
- Family ideology (ideas, values and beliefs): what are the beliefs, values, meanings, expectations, taboos, loaded issues, family secrets and myths shared by family members? For example, about family life, marriage, sexuality, death, gender roles, children, social behaviour, etc.
- family history: influence of the past on the present ‘inter-generational connectedness’
- developmental stage of family: current developmental tasks, transitions for the family and family members; influence of class, ethnicity on these.

**Strengths, Skills and Resources**
What are the resources or strengths (personal, economic, social) and problem-solving skills of this individual or family (and family members)?
b) **Key Issues** Write a brief SUMMARY statement of your assessment and identification of the problem/s (50-100 words). This section is very important in that it demonstrates your capacity to succinctly analyse such information.

c) **Areas of Contention**

How does your assessment compare with the initial referral and presenting problem?
Which of the issues/problems are accessible and relevant to social work interventions?
Identify which of your values and theoretical assumptions influenced this assessment.
Any difficulties in obtaining data, including that from other people and agencies and the significance of any gaps?
How do you believe people concerned saw your involvement so far?
At this stage you may offer some critical theoretical analysis of the client, family or group’s situation, the agency’s capacity to respond and your concerns or ideas at this initial stage of contact, if you have not already done so.

**Case Plan**

This section should include an account of how and what you and the individual/family planned for further intervention (i.e.at that time - not how you would have planned in hindsight):

a) What goals were established? How were they to be measured?
b) How did you negotiate a contract or working agreement with the individual/family/group?
b) What 'roles' did you agree to play? What did you in fact carry out?
c) What values and assumptions influenced the decisions about goals, methods and roles? **It is important here to refer to appropriate literature.**
d) Who else was to be involved in carrying out the intervention, and why?
e) How had your initial assessment of the person/s modified by this time?

**Implementation**

This section should be an account of what actually happened, including the interaction skills you were aware of using at the time of implementation: Here is where you tell the story of what you and the client/ family did, how well it worked, what were the constraints.

a) A description of your actions and the specific theories or techniques you used. You may for example break these sequentially into the times you met with the client/family e.g.

- first meeting at office
- second meeting: home visit
- third meeting Court hearing
- fourth meeting Case conference
- final meeting celebration and termination.

b) The reactions of the individual/family and any subsequent modification you made to your assessment, contract goals or methods, and why.

c) The nature and effect of the involvement of other people or organisations.

d) Any obstacles encountered in reaching the planned goals, e.g. lack of resources, your own level of ability, changing circumstances for the individual/family.
e) Analysis of the effectiveness of your role and interventions in this case. How well did the family achieve their goals? Did the family or your goals change during the case? If so why and how?

f) Reflection upon what values and/or theoretical knowledge actually influenced your intervention. **Specific reference to literature is required in this section.**

**Termination**
An analysis of the process of terminating your intervention, including:

a) How you terminated your relationship with the individual/family, and how you handled any issues related to termination, eg feelings of loss, ambivalence, guilt, etc. on the part of either worker or individual/family.

b) If appropriate, the process of referral to another worker or agency.

**Evaluation/Reflection**
If you have not done so already, please reflect on:

a. Your role in this situation;

b. The impact on your learning; and

c. How you may practice differently as a result of this situation.

**References**
Students are required to incorporate appropriate references into their Case Study including those specified in the following phases:

- Action Planning and Contracting; and
- Implementation.

At least 4-6 references should be used. Students will be given a re-write if the case study is not referenced adequately.
SOCIAL WORK
FIELD EDUCATION 2
(HWSS 1143)

Assessment Guide
13 FIELD EDUCATION 2 PLACEMENT DETAILS

13.1 LENGTH AND TIME OF PLACEMENT

Placement is 70 days unless days have been accrued from a previous placement. Usually placement is during July – November/December.

Students who have completed the pre-requisites for Field Education 2 and are available to engage in placement at least two days a week plus two weeks block placement (i.e 2 x 5 day weeks) may apply for approval to enrol and carry out this course in semester 1.

13.2 FOCUS OF PLACEMENT

Field Education 2 is a major component of the Bachelor of Social Work program. Through this course, students will have the opportunity to strengthen and develop their professional skills, knowledge and values within a workplace-learning environment.

In Field Education 2 there is an emphasis upon preparing students for beginning professional practice. It builds on the learning of Field Education 1 and provides opportunity to develop enhanced beginning practice skills. Students will be required to demonstrate an understanding of organizational and community contexts of practice, as well as effectively dealing with the ethical dilemmas that are likely to be encountered. Placements may focus on community organization, program development, policy development and/or research and may include a component of direct practice work. Students will be expected to analyse the practice setting by drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives, in particular those concerning power and exclusion, and to develop appropriate responses.

The Field Education course requires students to actively draw from previous knowledge and experience when determining their specific learning goals while they are on their field placements. This includes integrating previously studied material, especially in social work theory and practice and in field education as well as prior workplace learning.

Ordinarily, Field Education 2 has an emphasis on macro level practice, mostly in areas dedicated to developing policies, conducting research or building communities whereas Field Education 1 has an emphasis on direct work with service users. This means that Field Education 2 has a broader focus and has particular linkages with Policy Making Processes, Social Work with Groups, Social Research and Community Work Strategies.

In some cases students will have had a broader focus for Field Education 1 and would then have a direct practice focus for FE2. This would be negotiated with the Field Education Coordinator. It is also possible to have a placement that combines macro practice with further experiences in direct practice.
### 13.3 SOCIAL WORK GRADUATE CAPABILITY

At the completion of this course students will have the capacity to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Graduate Attribute</th>
<th>Specific attributes</th>
<th>Achieved in HWSS1143</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1. Apply the knowledge and practice skills to work with and for society’s most vulnerable and marginalised individuals, families, groups and communities | 1.1. Apply social work practice knowledge and skills for individual, interpersonal, group, family, organisational, community and policy practice  
1.2. Demonstrate a moral and political sensibility oriented towards the attainment of social justice and human rights particularly for vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people  
1.3 Demonstrate an awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability for the wellbeing particularly of vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people | X                     |
| 2. Analyse issues of social disadvantage, oppression and marginalisation from a socio-political and economic framework recognising the impact of capitalism on social relations | 2.1 Demonstrate the critical analytical capacity towards the phenomena of social stratification, capitalism, and economic globalisation.  
2.2 Demonstrate an understanding of the psychological, emotional and physical impact of these phenomena on individuals, families, groups and communities | X                     |
| 3. Promote social justice and human rights within a global and international perspective | 3.1 Demonstrate an understanding of social justice and human rights from a global and international perspective  
3.2 Demonstrate knowledge about developments in the global environment impacting on the wellbeing of for vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people, and on social work.  
3.3 Where appropriate apply these frameworks in contexts of practice with global and international dimensions. | X                     |
| 4. Understand the strengths and limits of the state’s policy, legislative and institutional arrangements on the context and practices for addressing social disadvantage | 4.1 Demonstrate knowledge of the policy, legislative and institutional arrangements of government.  
4.2 Demonstrate an awareness of how these impact on the wellbeing (or otherwise) of vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people  
4.3 Demonstrate critical analytical skills to evaluate developments in these in relation to vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people | X                     |
<p>| 5. Acquire relevant interdisciplinary knowledge required for practice | 5.1 Demonstrate awareness of knowledge of the cognate disciplines (psychology, sociology, political science, economics, sustainability) | X                     |</p>
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<tr>
<td>5.2 Demonstrate a capacity to apply this knowledge to both analysis and practice</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Apply interdisciplinary knowledge and skills in range of practice settings reflecting the contexts and challenges of contemporary social work</td>
<td>6.1 Demonstrate the dispositions of adaptiveness, flexibility, creativity, critical reflexivity and enterprise.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.2 Demonstrate knowledge of the contemporary context of practice and the challenges arising.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.3 Demonstrate knowledge of indigenous issues and associated practices.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.4 Demonstrate knowledge of international social work practice</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Apply their knowledge and practice skills in a manner that confronts structural disadvantage arising from cultural and religious difference, patriarchy, racism, disability, age and discrimination of the basis of sexual preference</td>
<td>7.1 Demonstrate knowledge of the dimensions of disadvantage</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.2 Demonstrate ability to apply this knowledge to practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.3 Demonstrate skills in constructive confrontation, negotiation, conflict management and resolution</td>
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<td>7.4 Demonstrate a capacity to work strategically</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7.5 Develop and sustain the attributes of personal resilience and hope.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Recognise and work constructively with power differentials between human service organisations, practitioners and vulnerable marginalised individuals, families, groups and communities</td>
<td>8.1 Demonstrate awareness of personal strengths and limitations as well as a cultural awareness of self</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.2 Demonstrate the capacity for critical reflexivity</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8.3 Demonstrate a capacity to employ personal strengths to achieve negotiated social work goals in different contexts.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8.4 Awareness of and capacity to proactively use self as a change agent</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.5 Demonstrate skills in individual and system advocacy</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.6 Demonstrate an understanding of power, its effects and consequences, and its dynamics</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Promote ethical, respectful, accountable and transparent practice processes</td>
<td>9.1 Demonstrate an understanding of social work as a practical-moral activity guided by professional ethics</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.2 Demonstrate an understanding of human rights</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.3 Demonstrate a capacity to use both frameworks in ethical reasoning and decision making</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Participate robustly in contemporary and changing ideological and political debates impacting on</td>
<td>10.1 Demonstrate a commitment to ongoing advocacy and political activism on the part of for vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
society, in an informed, flexible and grounded manner.

10.2 Demonstrate a capacity to undertake research on behalf of for vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people
10.3 Demonstrate a commitment to strengthening and sustaining civil society

11. Engage in life-long learning and on-going professional development.

11.1 Demonstrate an appreciation of the centrality of ongoing and sustained engagement with literature and other information which enriches practice, especially that with for vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people
11.2 Commit to and engage in and with professional supervision
11.3 Demonstrate a willingness and capacity to use information & communication technologies, and to overcoming the digital divide
11.4 Demonstrate a commitment to practice research, especially that which promotes the participation of and well being of for vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised people

13.4  PLACEMENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Performance in field education will be assessed using the framework of 7 core learning areas, as developed by the Combined Schools of Social Work (See below). This framework was developed with reference to the AASW practice standards and provides detailed information on core learning objectives applicable across all forms of social work practice. RMIT uses this framework to specify learning outcomes for field education in a way that is designed to be concrete and understandable to both students and field educators and which can be applied to a range of settings.

After the completion of both field education 1 and 2 students will have demonstrated capability across all seven areas of assessment and be able to perform at least at the level appropriate to a newly graduating social work practitioner.

A rating scale that identifies level of achievement against each of the 7 core learning areas will be used to assist students and field educators to assess the level of the student’s performance. This scale is designed for the purpose of indicating minimum standards expected for field education 1 and 2. It is holistic in nature, providing a broad rating against each of the core learning areas.

The scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Capable</td>
<td>Level 0</td>
<td>Performance not at basic level expected. Poor understanding of requirements. Practice unsafe or inappropriate. Knowledge or skills undeveloped. Little application to learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Capability</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Performance not yet capable. Some requirements understood. Further work needed to demonstrate beginning capability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Performance at beginning level expected. Requirements understood. Practice capable under close guidance and supervision. Limited adaptability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Capable</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Performance beyond level expected of newly qualifying practitioner. High levels of independence. Engages strongly in critical reflexivity. Exhibits ethical fluency. Generates new understandings or practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to be assessed</td>
<td>U/A</td>
<td>The work has either not been undertaken, or the supervisor has not had an opportunity to assess capability in this area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To pass field education 2 (final placement) students must at least reach a level of capability (level 3) across all 7 areas, relevant to placement setting, by the end of the placement.

In order to demonstrate this and maximise their learning students will have, together with their field educator developed a learning plan that identifies tasks and ways to measure them against each of the 7 broad learning areas. This includes taking maximum responsibility for their own learning and professional development.

13.5 PLACEMENT CORE LEARNING AREAS

Learning Area 1 - Values, ethics and professional practice:

Awareness of contextually relevant ethics in accordance with the AASW Code of Ethics and Practice Standards.

1.1 – Demonstrates an awareness of the relevance of the AASW Code of Ethics and Practice Standards within the placement setting (e.g. promotion of social justice and commitment to the dignity, value and uniqueness of individuals, social units, communities and cultures).

1.2 – Demonstrates an understanding of power relationships and structures that can give rise to and perpetuate relationships of inequality and social marginalisation for the target population, and demonstrates an ability to work constructively with issues of power and authority.

1.3 - Maintains an open and respectful perspective towards the values, views and opinions of others and is able to seek to incorporate notions of individual rights and needs, and collective responsibilities.

1.4 - Demonstrates an ability to recognise and understand one's own assumptions and values and their ability to impact on practice (especially within situations of conflicts of values and interest).

1.5 - Demonstrates an understanding of social work as a profession and how it differs from other related professions.
1.6 – Demonstrates an understanding of issues such as privacy and confidentiality in relation to the ethical management of client records, including relevant legislation and agency policies.

Learning Area 2 - Organisational context:

An understanding of the organisational, legal and political contexts of human services processes.

2.1- Demonstrates an understanding of the local and wider context in which the organisation operates (in particular the direct practice and social policy priorities of people living in the local region).

2.2 - Demonstrates an appreciation of the connection between individual problems, public issues and structural disadvantage.

2.3 - Demonstrates an awareness of and adherence to the organisational policies and procedures relating to workplace health and safety, risk management, and duty of care obligations to consumers. This includes awareness of Human Rights and other legal obligations.

Learning Area 3 - Use of knowledge in practice:

An understanding of theories and methodologies relevant to practice and ability to reflect critically upon their use and application.

3.1 - Able to identify a range of social work theories relevant to the practice setting.

3.2 - Able to articulate the relationship between theory and social work practice within the practice setting.

3.3 – Able to articulate the relationship between theory and social work practice at a macro-level (e.g. community & societal implications).

Learning Area 4 - Processes, skills and relationships:

An ability to form constructive relationships with individuals, groups and communities including user groups, colleagues, professionals and people in other significant roles / positions.

4.1 - Communication Skills:

4.1.1 - Demonstrates clear and effective interpersonal communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal) with individuals, groups and communities.

4.1.2 - Able to conduct single or joint interviews and demonstrates the ability to practice strategically (to engage, mobilise, challenge and encourage people in the change process).

4.1.4 – Able to deal with situations involving anger, conflict and challenging behavior.

4.1.5 – Able to write analytically and to distinguish between fact and opinion.

4.1.6 – Able to incorporate formal knowledge and professional principles into documentation.
4.1.7 – Able to prepare written assessment reports that demonstrate the ability to gather relevant information about and with the client/group or community.

4.1.8 – Able to use information technology for recording information, word-processing and data analysis.

4.1.9 - Adheres to documented policies within the agency: necessary recording processes – reports, assessment schedules, administrative Documentation, statistical procedures, letters, etc.

4.2 - Assessment, Intervention, Referral and Evaluation:

4.2.1 – Able to undertake an assessment of individuals and groups across a diverse range of life circumstances.

4.2.2 - Able to use relevant organisational assessment and referral frameworks

4.2.3 - Demonstrates understanding of both formal and informal methods for evaluating Social Work interventions and ability to articulate these to both service user and supervisor.

4.2.4 - Able to implement the intervention plan, engaging in activities such as: facilitation, mediation, negotiation and advocacy on behalf of service users; counseling, education and skills transference; coordination and liaison with other service providers (in collaboration with the client/service user); crisis intervention; working with an interpreters.

4.2.5 - Able to implement strategies to support and assist clients to find new ways of coping.

4.3 - Group & Team-work Skills:

4.3.1 - Demonstrates an understanding of group processes within organisational groups and committees, consumers, consumer groups and authority figures.

4.3.2 - Demonstrates capacity to work collaboratively with colleagues and/or team members in task-focused work groups, committees, and networks.

4.3.3 - Demonstrates the skills required to achieve the balance necessary for the efficient and effective chairing of productive meetings.

4.3.5 – Demonstrates an ability to participate in the management of meetings through assuming formal roles, e.g. secretary/scribe, note-taker, chairperson.

4.3.6 - Demonstrates ability to co-ordinate and liaise when necessary with other service providers, in collaboration with the client/service user.

Learning Area 5 - Self learning and professional development:

The ability to take responsibility for one’s own learning and development, and to perform at a level of competence appropriate to a beginning social work practitioner, including the skills to manage one’s future career and the transition from university to professional practice.
5.1 - Demonstrate the ability to participate proactively in negotiating and developing the supervisory relationship.

5.2 - Demonstrate an ability to formulate and articulate one’s own learning needs and objectives.

5.3 - Demonstrate a willingness to take risks and expose own practice for scrutiny from supervisor (and other team members).

5.4 - Demonstrate an awareness of personal feelings and experience and how these affect practice.

5.5 - Demonstrate understanding of the theory of critical reflection & an ability to use this approach to critically examine own practice.

5.6 - Demonstrate the capacity to work with increasing autonomy and professional responsibility.

5.7 - Identify areas for future learning & development & recognise the importance of future professional development as a social worker.

5.8 - Ability to demonstrate appropriate responsibility, accountability, reliability and initiative within the work setting

Learning Area 6 - Research:

Recognition of research as an integral part of social work practice; demonstrating knowledge and understanding of all types and stages of social research.

6.1 - Demonstrates an understanding of how research knowledge informs practice (e.g. consulting published literature).

6.2 - Able to locate literature relevant to practice area (evidence-informed practice)

6.3 - Able to identify researchable topics/issues within practice setting

6.4 - Able to conduct research and program evaluation using sound methodological approaches (If placement includes a research or evaluation project)

6.5 - Demonstrates an ability to seek out and establish collaborative partnerships (networks) with others working in the field or related fields, in order to obtain relevant information

Learning Area 7 - Social policy:

An understanding of the legislative and social policies which influence the different fields of practice including knowledge of relevant legislative and policy frameworks.

7.1 – Able to identify relevant legislation, policies and regulations relevant to practice area and whether these are consistent with social work values and principles

7.2 – Able to analyze the impacts of relevant legislation, policies and regulations on practice
7.3 – Demonstrates an understanding of current debates, social issues and/or politics which impact on the field of practice

7.4 – Demonstrates an ability to understand policy development, community and political processes involved in linking direct practice experience with broader social change objectives.

13.6 ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

In order to pass Social Work Field Education 2, students must demonstrate:

• Attendance at pre placement briefing/s

• Participation in integrative seminars whilst on placement

• Satisfactory completion of the 70 Day Field Placement, or equivalent. This includes the satisfactory completion of the Learning Plan and Mid and End of Placement Reviews. (The Placement Report is central to this requirement)

• Satisfactory completion of an evaluation report on placement performance (Placement Report)

The Field Education course is not graded beyond Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory. In order to obtain a Satisfactory result, all components of the assessment must be passed.

13.7 MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR FIELD EDUCATION 2

At the conclusion of the course, students will have demonstrated:

Competency, appropriate to the placement setting, in all 7 areas of assessment outlined below. This includes taking maximum responsibility for their own learning and professional development and to be able to perform at an advanced level of beginning professional social work practice.

Students will together with their field educator develop a learning plan that identifies tasks and way to measure performance against each of the broad assessment areas.

13.8 GUIDE TO PREPARING FINAL REPORT (FE2)

The final report should be completed by student and Field Educator and signed before the student leaves the agency. Where more than one Field Educator is engaged with the student, the written report requires input from all parties. The lead role in the initial report writing is negotiable and may be undertaken by the student, Field Educator or task supervisor. If the lead role is undertaken by the Field Educator, it is important that the task supervisor/s contribute to Section E of the report.

Student results cannot be finalised until the School has received the field education assessment report, signed by the Field Educator and student. We request prompt attention to this matter.

The report is due at RMIT two weeks after the end of placement. It may be hand-delivered to the Social Work Field Education Administrative Staff, or if mailing, refer to the address on page 1 of this manual and address it to the attention of the Social Work Field Education Administrative
Staff. The report then goes to the Field Education Coordinator, who makes the final decision on a student’s result. The final report is kept on the student’s file.

Students and Field Educators are required to keep a copy of the report before it is submitted.

The Final Report pro forma which follows is available from the Social Work Field Education website at http://www.rmit.edu.au/socialservices/fieldeducation

Section A 1 : FACTUAL SUMMARY OF PLACEMENT

Student Name
MSW or BSW (delete one)
Field Education 1 or 2 (delete one)
Placement Agency
Field Educator (Qualified SW)
Task Supervisor (if any)
Liaison Person
Commencement Date: ____/____/____ Completion Date: ____/____/____
Full-time __ Part-time__ Number of days per week ___

Brief Description of Agency or Program Focus

Brief Summary of Placement Tasks

Brief Summary of Student’s Key Learning Goals for this Placement

Section A 2: COMPLETED LEARNING PLAN

The original Learning Plan should be attached as Appendix, with each section of the Mid Placement Review and Final Report completed and signed by Student, Field Educator and, if appropriate Task Supervisor.

Section B: THE FIELD EDUCATOR’S REPORT

The Field Educator should provide a summary of
(a) the areas of performance in which student has shown development in this placement and
(b) the areas of performance in which further development is needed. Specific details of performance against the seven learning areas will be contained in the latest version of the learning plan, also signed by student, field educator and task supervisor (where applicable).

A statement on the overall level of performance demonstrated by the student on placement, specifically:
(a) whether performance is considered SATISFACTORY or UNSATISFACTORY, and
(b) whether or not the student is considered ready to enter practice as a social worker (if final year/FE 2 placement).

This section should be signed by both the student and Field Educator, to ensure that the student has been it, and that there has been opportunity for discussion of its content. The student’s
signature does not necessarily mean agreement with the content – but that s/he has seen the report.

**Section C: FIELD EDUCATOR’S /TASK SUPERVISORS COMMENTS on the FIELD EDUCATION PROGRAM.**

Please provide feedback on Field Education Program in regard to:

7. Structure and timing of placement
8. Value of liaison contact with School staff
9. Value of Field Educators’ sessions at RMIT
10. Resources provided by the University
11. Usefulness of assessment guide
12. General comments on Field Education program.

**Future Planning:**

Would you be prepared to field teach a RMIT student next year? If so, do you have a preference for a particular program and/or year?

**Any other comments to aid future planning?**

**Section D: STUDENTS COMMENTS On The Placement and Field Education Course**

This section is **compulsory** and is seen as an integral part of the overall report. It is to be written by the student.

Students should comment on:

8. Opportunities offered by the placement
9. Personal development in the agency
10. How the placement has helped to integrate theory and practice
11. Other areas of knowledge and skills which were improved in this placement
12. Thinking ahead to the future, areas of knowledge and skills to be developed
13. Comments/feedback regarding the Field Education program (liaison meetings, integrative seminars, briefings, resources etc.)
14. Other comments.

*This section should be signed by both the student and Field Educator, to ensure that the student has seen it, and that there has been opportunity for discussion of its content. The student’s signature does not necessarily mean agreement with the content - but that s/he has seen the report.*

**Section E: OTHER WORKER’S Comments on Student’s Performance**

Completion of this section is optional. It allows for additional formal comments to be made concerning the student’s performance by a worker (other than the Field Educator or Task Supervisor) and/or service users with whom the student has had frequent contact in relation to their Field Education experience. (The Section B outline can be used as a guideline for completion of this section).

Submissions for inclusion in this section of the report must be received by the Field Educator in time for the Field Educator to include them in the report. *This section must be signed by the ‘other worker/service user’, the Field Educator and the student.*
**Section F: APPENDICES**

Attach evidence of work undertaken if applicable. If you have completed a report or product while on placement, the Program Administrative Officer would be grateful for a copy. Student work is extremely useful in promoting field education and it assists students undertaking field placements in future. Please ensure that you have the agency’s permission before attaching a copy of any work undertaken. *Every care should be taken to delete any identifying details, to ensure confidentiality.*

Signatures

________________________  ___________________________ (date)
Field Educator

________________________  ___________________________ (date)
Task Supervisor (where applicable)

________________________  ___________________________ (date)
Student

NOTE: A report cannot be formally acknowledged unless it contains the signatures of Student, Field Educator and other workers where applicable.
REFERENCES


Our Community Pty Ltd. (2010) ’So you have a “Mental Illness”..What Now?’ Our Consumer Place Resource Centre Booklet One.


